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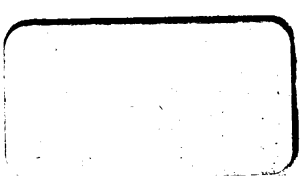

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THE TRUTH OF SPIRITUALISM

THE TRUTH OF SPIRITUALISM

BY

"RITA"

(MRS. DESMOND HUMPHREYS)

PHILADELPHIA AND LONDON
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
1920

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TO

SIR OLIVER J. LODGE

WITH GRATITUDE FOR
"RAYMOND"

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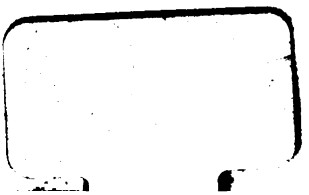

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a wave of spiritual development swept over the world.

Men began to question of the Life Beyond as they had not previously questioned. The Theosophists on the one hand, and the Spiritualists on the other, announced new discoveries—and prophesied a new order of human experience. Professional mediums offered proofs of communication with the "other side." Books sprang mushroom-like from the soil of explanation. Séances, spirit life, spirit teaching, brought in their wake a whole flotilla of lesser craft, such as table-turning, clairvoyance and physical phenomena, more or less trustworthy. A great outcry arose. The Church, as ever, was the severest judge and the most dogmatic denouncer of a "new thing." It judged without seeking evidence, and denounced what it had not troubled to

understand, from the pulpit of its own estimate of values. It started an onslaught on mediums, and their strange faculties of clairvoyance, clair-audience and psychic revelations.

It knew nothing of these matters, but want of knowledge has never prevented the Church from censuring what it has not troubled to investigate. Witness the archives of science, astrology and alchemy; the funeral pyres of the *Index Expurgatorius*, that ecclesiastical death warrant of progress or research. The same fate awaited any exponent of spiritism. Even at the present time anyone who takes up the question seriously is somewhat in the position of a martyr awaiting the first stone. He will assuredly be assaulted with the missiles of sceptics, worried and badgered for "proofs" by believers and unbelievers, ridiculed by the intellectuals and scoffed at by the materialists. Yet in spite of all this there have been many religious men, and not a few scientific ones,

who have come to the conclusion that the spiritual side of life is a real and continuous carrying on of the intelligence manifested on the material. Also, that the two planes, material and spiritual, are closely allied, and that death is more of a bridge than a barrier between them.

In order to arrive at such a conclusion there must have been good and sufficient reason, and some evidence. People who think deeply are not easily convinced, and a conception of the relationship between death and survival is not given to every human consciousness. It has been hedged round with difficulties from childhood upwards; supported by false ideals, false religious teaching, and that crudest type of mental and moral control—public opinion.

To begin with, people will not think of death as release. They think of it as a terror, an enemy, a foe to be fought by every physical power and contrivance. Almost every human being in the civilised world *fears*

death. Life they know and can endure even in its hardest and harshest aspect, but death is the black cap of justice, the inevitable *finis* to place and project and ambition.

There is no welcome for Life's grim foe when he stands on the threshold of home, or seizes his victim by the cruel aid of accident. And this in spite of religion and churches and priestly teaching, and Christianity, so called. For alas! the real Christ-like attributes are as rare as they are Utopian, and though man has been rescued from the brute level he is very, very far from the higher attributes of the Godhead which should be life's crowning expression.

Now if spiritualism or spiritism has done nothing else, it *has* succeeded in showing that life is not only continuous after death, but preserves much the same mental conditions. There is no instantaneous conversion of the human ego into a cherubim or an archangel. The *spirit nature* of the man or woman or child who has " passed on " from the physi-

cal plane remains the same. The body was merely its envelope, its means of manifesting various passions and desires, or evolving certain gifts of genius which dowered its earthly inhabitation. If that spirit was lovable, brave, generous, unselfish on the earth plane, it carries with it these same attributes. Through their good and noble achievements it wins for itself place and higher powers, and spiritual duties by which to exercise or perfect its still active life.

Man has been made the interpreter of the universe according to his powers of discernment. It has unfolded to him its secrets gradually and surely. Not half of them are yet revealed, but those that answer to his needs and assist his mental and spiritual faculties are there to his hand when he seeks them.

The spiritual needs of man can only be sustained by truth and conviction. Miracles or wonders do not *satisfy,* they only create an insatiable curiosity which is for ever ques-

tioning, and for ever unanswered. It is here that religion, in its accepted condition, so signally fails. Its proofs rest on unreconcilable traditions. Its thousands of forms, creeds and churches are only bewildering to the seeker after truth. Why the " Church " arrogates to itself the sole power of explaining and teaching religion, only the Church knows. Certainly its teachings have been more terrifying than satisfactory. Fear has been its weapon of assault, and the penalties of an after existence its chain of bondage. To keep man in subjection to *itself* has been the Church's one endeavour since it became a corporate body of organisation. Proclaiming itself spiritual, it has at once attacked and defamed what is really a demonstration of spirituality. It has condemned man to a brief, unsatisfactory existence and an eternity of either compensation or condemnation. It terrorises the child's mind with thought of hell-fire and a Supreme Judge whom childhood and youth must *naturally*

offend, and then offers it the consolation of a Christian heaven which in no way applies or appeals to any material conception of existence.

What the Church and its forms of religion seem to overlook is the fact that man is a spiritual continuation of himself even after he has resigned a material existence. Within his material body, imprisoned in the envelope of flesh, has always been that self, and he takes with him into the next life that personality which he *alone* knows. Not the best or worst of us is fully revealed to even the closest friend or relative on this plane of material existence. No one knows Me as I am save God who made Me what I am. And what I know, and what every thinking, sensible searcher after truth knows, is that I feel within myself I shall not cease to be *myself*. I shall want to exist usefully. I shall want to fulfil my powers and exercise my talents. I cannot feel that they will pass into nothingness for the one good and sufficient reason

that there is no such thing as nothingness. Things change, but they do not cease to *be;* life develops, it does not end.

It is this recognised feeling of perpetuity on another plane and in another form of life that has given spiritualism its fascination as well as its powers of comfort. I ask any sensible individual who has read the Book of Revelation whether his soul or spirit, or whatever he chooses to call his inner consciousness, can picture itself content with such an after-existence as there described. And even if those transcendent "joys" of harps and hymns do seem satisfactory, how does he contemplate an eternity of their continuation?

Every active force, every output of intelligence, every spark from the divine flame of genius rebels against extinction. But the Church has taken the physical side of man as his measure and representation, and anyone reading the Bible or Prayer Book or any theological work on that subject will see that

the *inner,* seeking, restless ego is unconsidered. The resurrection of the *body* is specially defined in the Creed, and that body is to enter into some vague, glorified existence and go about crowned and robed and singing devotional hymns to the Supreme Deity it has been taught to fear while on earth and assuredly seems unable to comprehend in heaven. This is what the ordinary religious teaching of earth has meant. This is what cleric and Church and Sunday school have imparted as religious faith. And this it is which robs death of no terror but rather implants it; which makes physical life so all-important and gives the body pre-eminence over the spirit of man.

Religion as taught on earth has made death a most unpleasant word, and the ceremonies and penalties of death a most unpleasing observance. Spiritualism, on the other hand, has glorified and redeemed it. Most of us realise that death is in our bodies as soon as we assume life. The two walk side

by side during our earthly existence, fighting their battles just as wrong or right, conscience and inclination fight theirs. Yet life could harmonise death into a nocturne of beauty if we would deal with it as with other adjuncts of materiality; if we from the first acknowledged its necessity instead of rebelling against it; if we looked upon life as the school-house of a special form of education, and did our level best to work for results of what we are taught, not only here but hereafter.

An active form of work, an active form of existence, the power to create and accomplish—these death does not take from us. The ego is still the ego, with a *purpose* for existence, and a goal to reach. Great gifts, great genius, great talents, nobility of mind, unselfish devotion to cause or individual, none of these things cease from *being* because the special entity who exemplified them ceases from physical manifestation. Accident, sickness, the chances of war, the hazards

of travel, the misfortunes of heredity, these may account for an early death or an imperfect materiality, but the real self can "carry on" triumphantly and continue its work and evolve its destiny.

And this is what spiritualism has shown us.

Life and death are not two enemies but two intelligencies. They should agree over the inevitable separation which is a special distinction of each, not war against a perfectly natural and unavoidable contingency. Life imprisons matter in that house of illusion which is the flesh, but death opens the door of spirit to liberty and freedom.

There are a thousand and one things which apply to man and concern man apart from Church observance; from processions and vestments, and all the ritual and extravagant display of clerical supremacy. If these things were of *real* spiritual importance all would be well, but are they? In what sense do they glorify a Supreme Being who has created nature, and man, and set them to the

warfare of existence and the strange vicissitudes of physical life? They merely pander to priestly self-importance; to that "man set in a little brief authority" whose ecclesiastical antics might well make angels weep.

The modern Church makes religious observance as spectacular as a theatre. It does not arouse reverence or create real spirituality in the mind of any critical observer. It panders to the lower instincts of vanity, self-glorification, greed and ambition. It makes dogma its god and superstition its creed. It gives stones for bread and husks for nourishment. It has established itself upon an impossible foundation and built up thereon a structure whose substance invites the assault of every critical mind. When one begins to think of oneself, apart from Church doctrine and Church teaching, one is speedily confounded by the difference between fallacy and fact; between misrepresentation and actual happening; between natural law and spiritual interpretations.

INTRODUCTION

Controversies have raged the world over; arguments have led almost to warfare.

Theory and fact have ranged themselves in opposition, and fought out their battle of creed and tradition. Yet is mankind any the better? Is the truth of life or the mystery of death any nearer the answer to the cry of creation: "WHY?"

Why a world at all, and seeing there *is* a world, why so much suffering and strife; so much that is hideous against so much that is beautiful, so much that is vile and terrible against so much that is pure and good?

Two great forces rule this world as we know it. Two rival powers for ever strive for place and dominance. Good and Evil are the arbiters of man's fate, the creators of his character. Though he remained uncivilised, untaught, knowing nothing of religion or of God, yet he would not escape these factors of destiny. With the acceptance of life he is the martyr of a material existence that life has originated, varied, and

filled with obligations. He cannot but feel; he cannot but think; he loves and hates and fears; he struggles for knowledge even if his existence is of the most primitive description. He strives to lift himself to some altitude of comprehension. He learns from Nature the secrets of change in the life forms around, and he learns from death the lessons of sorrow and of separation.

It is the fruit of these lessons which has first blossomed and then ripened into the teaching of the spirit; which has sought and received answer, and let loose upon the material plane a flood of psychical revelation which will prove of colossal importance to the race.

Who scoffed at the possibility of the electric current being captured and harnessed to man's needs? Who ignored the mystery of the heavens and cried down science as a crime instead of a service? Who mocked at the possibilities of the aeroplane and submarine, and that last and greatest of scientific dis-

coveries—the control of the mysterious ether which proved wireless telegraphy to be a possibility? The same bigoted, uncritical, and *unthinking* minds who now assault the faith of spiritualism. Who while standing on the "sure" ground of Biblical teaching affirm and deny in the same breath that man *is* a spirit, yet can never manifest *as* a spirit, because the power to sense or to witness such a manifestation is not given to everyone. For there will always be those who "have eyes and see not," and ears "and hear not," and understandings which they refuse to take out of the beaten track of safety. To these and such as these it is useless to speak. No man is convinced by argument of what he has obstinately set himself to discredit.

But there is no need for the higher intelligence to vex itself on account of the obstinacy of the lower. How many followers had Christ? Twelve. Twelve only, and two of them were faithless. Yet by their work and influence they spread His teachings

throughout the world. In like manner may the little band of spiritualists spread theirs, saying only: "Seek for yourself; prove for yourself. Here is no dogma, nor creed, nor any arbitrary authority. We know that those who have passed over to another life—*live*. What is more, they do not forget, they are not changed. The dross is purged from the little streak of gold, the new life demands a new service." And it is *that* service they fulfil when they in still imperfect fashion try their best to communicate with those on the physical plane. The conditions are changed. Often they cannot be seen or heard of those they loved best, and thus are forced to send their message through another channel. The faculty or gift of mediumship, and all its variations of trance and clairvoyance are offered to these returning spirits. Not all return, nor wish to return. But those who do have said it is possible, and more, have given satisfactory proofs that they *are* present to the inquirer.

All the exposition of fraud and trickery connected with this subject cannot alter the fact that it *exists,* as a subject, and more, that it is growing of greater and greater importance, and offers itself fearlessly to criticism or exploitation. Science is not above interesting itself in the matter; psychical research is an acknowledged factor in demonstrating the reality of phenomena that it is impossible to explain by ordinary means. Great writers, great thinkers, poets, artists, even theologians, are daily giving their faith and their support to the truth of spiritualism. The coward and the scoffer may mock as they please; their day will come. The hour of death will face their scepticism with such consolation as they deserve.

Every soul must work out its own salvation. No other can take up its burden or suffer for its negligence once the barrier is down. If the Church would teach that it is the *life men live* that counts, not their faith, nor their professions, nor even their death-

bed atonements, perhaps its teachings would have more effect. But religion as a form, and even as a practice, is only concerned with the surface values of life; the outside of the cup and platter, the ceremonies and hypocrisies and collection boxes which have no real spirituality behind them.

So it is that to-day the Church finds itself confronted by loss of power, loss of influence, the chill disfavour of scepticism and the self-acknowledged discords of "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals."

THE TRUTH OF SPIRITUALISM

I

The Beginning of the Spiritual Movement

To go back to the accepted re-appearance of those who have departed this life one need only turn to the Bible and its several records in the Old and New Testament. Following these records, which have Church authority for their truth, one can pursue the subject through the varying periods of history, and of strange and mysterious happenings. Their name is legion, and they fill the shelves of museums and libraries, private and public, with their strange testimony.

The lure of the occult has always been a lure of fascination. The words "uncanny," "supernatural," "ghostly," are words of ap-

peal to the imagination, and to that *inner* sense of wonder about the hereafter from which few are exempt.

No child can resist the attraction of the fairy tale or the ghost story, and very few "grown-ups" can resist it either. It seems natural to believe in something apart or aside from mere physical knowledge and mere material development.

The astrologers and astronomers of Hebraic days had a cult of their own, and exercised a very powerful influence over mankind. Following them came a host of sibyls and soothsayers and magicians and wizards to keep up the science of the mystical. Persecution hounded them even as at the present time it hounds anything called "spirit manifestation." The fear of what lies just beyond this material unsatisfactory existence is a fear shared by the majority of those living in the world. Yet even that fear does not still the longing to lift the curtain, to see beyond, to get some glimpse of the

future. The Church does not encourage such pursuits. They mean playing with the powers of darkness, though why so sweeping a denunciation is supported by clerical authority its supporters cannot say.

No hand has been strong enough to crush out the desire for occult knowledge, no voice loud enough to silence its claim to be heard. And so down the ages, ever nearer, closer, more convincing, has swept the message of spirit revelation. The advent of its faith was announced about 1847–1848 by a certain family in America who found the responsibilities of mediumship thrust upon them. The first suggestion of communication between two worlds aroused the usual storm of curiosity and discredit.

The lot of the medium is rarely a "happy one." He or she is used much as an instrumentalist uses his piano or violin, expecting it to be a passive ministrant to his powers of sound production. These early mediums (the Fox family) were subjected to so much

persecution that they actually prayed to be delivered from such visitations. The prayer was answered and they were left free, but no sooner did that happen than they began to realise their loss. They missed the messages of " spirit friends "; they recognised that the fear and dislike of the living world were the great barriers to that world beyond, whose inhabitants had a mission to fulfil.

In 1850 the first public exhibitions of mediumistic control and mediumistic power were given in New York, and then the storm broke loose which has raged with greater or less severity up to the present time. Of course the chief charge brought against spiritualism is the fact of " raps," and " table-turning," and various trivialities of physical attributes which shock religious folk most terribly.

Is it because they imagine they will be transformed into glorified angelic beings the moment they pass into the other world? " If I thought I should only be brought back

here through a medium and have to rap at a table, and spell out messages through the alphabet I would rather—well, not survive at all."

The speaker is not exceptional in that aspiration. The average life of man on earth is very far from presenting angelic attributes.

But let me ask those who speak like this what is really *their conception of themselves.* Do they feel that they are capable of becoming holy, pure and seraphic beings the moment they cast off their earthly shell? Are they not the very sort of people who shun any thought of death as a *personal* touch, and whose religion is patented for them by Church ceremonies and Sunday observance? Or are they the absolutely worldly, to whom the very thought of an after-life is abhorrent, and whose whole ambition is to get the best they can of everything that means the physical side of existence?

If these good folk would only rid themselves of the idea that the change of death

will mean a change of the *ego* which has been manifesting in life, they would recognise—reluctantly perhaps, but advisedly for their own sakes—that the very commonplace method of drawing attention to their visits is a proof in itself of unchanged identity. They wish, as it were, to call upon an earth friend; to attract attention. While on the earth plane this was done by means of a knock at the door. Therefore they knock.

Again, the spirit-form cannot show itself *visibly* once it loses its earthly substance. The occasions when the dead have been seen by the living are rare occasions, and the seer has possessed clairvoyant faculties which enables the inner vision, so to speak, to descry the phantom or spirit form when it is invisible to others not possessed of that faculty. Books that record appearances of spirit-forms are numerous enough for all nations and tongues to have access to their records, and it is worth remembering that there is *no* nation without some such record, thus

giving proof of an undoubted influence from the world beyond on the world present.

Why is it impossible that those we knew on this material plane should wish to communicate with us once they wake from that "sleep of rest" (which is death's first gift) and find they are still *themselves?*

Let each individual who reads these words sit quietly alone and ask himself, or herself, what they feel they *are;* what constitutes the living active personality that seems so all-important to *itself,* and by whom Death would be dreaded as a visitant. Let them recall what sleep means; or a dream and the awakening. In dreams we often live through active torments or distresses. We wake and find we are still ourselves. I can find no authority, living or dead, who proclaims a change in that self. It will continue to exist on another plane, under other conditions, and it will carry with it the burden of its own misdeeds. No vicarious repentance can

atone for crime or banish the memory of guilty actions.

Man makes his own hell for himself when he creates a living memory of his sin by a vicious enjoyment of sinning.

The fact of dying is no criterion of holiness or even of penitence. This is not a comforting creed, but it seems to me that the "comfort" of creeds is as unjustifiable as it is weak. Christ came to earth to "save sinners," but He told them to sin no more. If repentance were a real thing the sinner would find relief, possibly some degree of happiness, but we are not told he could forget his sin or free himself from its natural consequences.

The Bible is a chronicle of authority that lends itself to the widest misconception. Satan can quote Scripture for his own purpose, always supposing that Satan is a personality and not merely a pseudonym of evil.

Man should learn his responsibility to himself as soon as he recognises the fact of self-consciousness. He should be taught less of

vicarious salvation and more of personal survival. He should be made to feel that he cannot shake off his sins and offences, as a water-dog shakes off the drops after his river bath. If he has preferred wrong to right, selfishness to renunciation, greed and graft to generosity, crooked ways to straight paths, he will find their record awaiting him on the other side, and have to work back to penitence and possible restitution.

The burden of guilt has been seen by the clairvoyant as plainly as Bunyan's vision showed the heavy burden on Christian's shoulders. Sometimes these burdened spirits do their utmost to return, if only for the relief of confession, but they are handicapped by those very conditions they have made for themselves. They have to sorrow and repent, and to see the fruit of their misdeeds working evil for others, and through much tribulation and remorse must they work out their own salvation.

Let the Church preach that man is not

going to get away from *himself,* not going to be "saved" from suffering and penance by any masses for his soul, or prayers for his regeneration, and it will give him an incentive to live his best, strive for the highest, and leave a clean record behind him as well as take one with him. But so long as he hears of his soul as a sort of plaything for pious experiments, a subject for priestly autocracy, so long will he scoff at any idea of the possibilities of spiritual visitation.

Vicarious salvation has only proved itself the basis of irreligion. It has made man an irresponsible being for whom heaven and hell (according to Church interpretation) are playing a waiting game. Until he can stand alone and regard his soul as he regards his body, something peculiarly *his own,* he will not appreciate spiritual possibilities, nor pursue them.

The difference between any spiritualistic meeting and any ordinary Church ceremony is that each individual recognises his spiritual

responsibility for the one but not for the other. The church service is framed for monotonous perpetuity. One need not wonder that its ministers have grown weary of perpetually reading the same words, intoning the same prayers, and gabbling over the same forms of devotion. Monotony is a deadly foe to interest, and there is little interest in repetition.

With a spiritualistic meeting there is always a fresh interest. The prayers are never the same, nor are the addresses. The clairvoyant possibilities of the speaker often place the members of the audience in touch with spirit friends who have been anxious to communicate and who prove by appearance or message that they are able to do so.

No such visitant or communicator is *forced* upon one's notice. It seems a natural happening, perfectly possible and allowable. The clairvoyant may be in "trance," as it is called, but the descriptions are perfectly simple. It is as if the speaker stood in a

room and described the dress, appearance and speech of the various occupants of that room. That those they come to cannot see them is a matter of no surprise to the visitor. For spirit recognises the bondage of flesh even more surely than flesh recognises the ethereality of spirit. It is enough that they can come a little closer to the earth plane, can find a method of transmitting message or recognition, and say: "I am still I. This side of existence is not out of touch with yours. We can use your mediums as you use the electric force surrounding the earth, the etheric waves which convey your wireless messages. Space has certain dimensions. We have but removed from one to another. We have still work to do, duties to fulfil. But all here is different. Beautiful, restful, save for those whose life has demanded unrest or vicious excitements. Faith shall be justified of itself. You have believed in us, and we come to bless and help you."

(This is one of the many messages

given at a public meeting of the Spiritual Alliance Society.)

With regard to private séances the sitter is wholly within the influence of the medium if the two are in proper agreement. Sometimes they are not. Two positives or two negatives clash; this interferes with the current of communication, and the medium is helpless. The sitter is perhaps irritated by the absence of what was expected, and tells friends "there's nothing in it." But the fault lies with his or her own peculiar or unreceptive condition. There are those who help and those who hinder, and sometimes a paid or untrustworthy medium will resort to fraud in order to support a reputation based on "successful" sittings.

When the first wave of spiritualism broke over this side and sent the force and foam of its revelations across a sea of incredulity, there were not lacking many opportunists who seized upon a new method of making a livelihood, as well as earning a reputation for

occult powers. The stimulant of curiosity brought hundreds to private séances or public manifestations, and "specialists," like the Davenport Brothers, Home, Husk, Eglinton, Mrs. Piper, Miss Fowler, and others too numerous to mention, reaped a rich harvest of notoriety.

Of course there were two sides to the question of possible spirit manifestations, and the war of believer and scoffer was waged with unusual acrimony. People who readily swallowed a "divine birth" miracle could not realise spirit mediumship as anything but trickery. The conditions enforced by research were apostrophised as means for fraudulent practices. Darkness, a circle, a table, a cabinet, all were condemned to ridicule because the proposed phenomena required such conditions.

They were the sort of people who would demand a photograph's development without chemicals or a darkened room! Who had declared that to run a tramway by electricity

or harness the waves of the air to a machine that should deliver and accept messages were schemes fit for madmen. Yet the little band of believers patiently pursued their investigations. The proofs they received were convincing enough to them and they could face ridicule with equanimity.

As year followed year more began to be evolved and written on the subject of spiritualism. It was too serious and engrossing a subject to be disregarded, and the inquirers formed themselves into a solid and reverent body, determined to find out the truth of the after-life as revealed by this science or religion or whatever they called it.

Through turmoil of opposition and obstacles of fraud and deception the work went on. Even science, after long evasion, condescended to investigate matters, and great names gave their authority to what was called "inquiry into survival after death." The Church reluctantly acknowledged that spiritualism did not profess to be a substitute

for Christianity, but rather a substantiation of Christ's teachings and the highest type of religion.

Those in the movement who had either by clairvoyance, clairaudience, automatic writing or trance mediumship received proof of the "living" dead they had loved on earth, were ready to affirm their belief and stand by its results. By the beginning of the present century scarcely a town in England but had its society of spiritualists, its place of meeting and its opportunities for investigation of the subject.

Gradually the idea that spiritualism is the key to man's eternal destiny has rooted itself in the minds of the seeker. The door is opening wider and yet wider. The next plane of life is also a plane of existence, not so different from the present *at first*. But with spiritual change comes spiritual progress, and those who have lived for their higher selves on this plane will find their reward on the other.

BEGINNING OF SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

A religion that can make man feel his responsibility both to himself and others is a better thing than creeds and ceremonies. He learns that there is no such thing as "vicarious salvation," for the soul can only save itself when it has learnt to know itself. A realisation of the true must necessarily be followed by a rejection of the false.

II

Séances—Public and Private

When the first spark of spiritual interest is alight the person interested naturally requires something to keep it burning. "What can I do?" "Where can I go?" "How am I to discover whether there is any truth in what I have heard?"

These questions fall naturally from the lips of a possible convert. Following inquiry comes an equally natural desire to know what *is* a séance; why mediums are necessary; and if spiritual communications are to be depended on.

To all these questions there is but one answer: "Try, and prove for yourself."

My own first experience of "spiritual demonstration" goes back to quite early girlhood, when owing to my father's interest in the subject we used to try for communications, sitting at a table with joined hands, in

semi-darkness, and received messages by means of the alphabet and "raps." As a family we had no object in deceiving ourselves, and my father used to keep a written record of the various communications.

They made interesting reading at the time, but after I grew up and left home I did not pursue the subject.

The education and experiences of life seemed of more importance than "circles" and mediums and manifestations. But the real interest did not die; it only stood aside and waited its opportunity for renewal. At various times and under varying circumstances I again pursued investigation. The "movement" so called seemed spreading and strengthening with years. It had its own public and its own publications. Séances were widely advertised and opportunity for research afforded to both sceptics and seekers.

Storm and stress were recurring agents in forcing methods and discoveries upon public

notice; criticism was violent; discussion furious. Ridicule was showered upon those who believed either in message or manifestation from the " other side." And yet spiritualism was not killed. Steadily and surely it worked for an end and a purpose. The " other side " became less of a mystery, more of a land of hopefulness. The strange bigotry which for centuries had limited man to one life and one law of existence was passed through the furnace of discussion. Science and religion arrayed their forces against psychological facts that proved demonstrable, and invited attention, and both science and religion reluctantly confessed that there *did* seem " something in it." The " it " being the problem of spirit communication between the existing and the next world.

When Florence Marryat, the author, published her book *There is No Death* she had a public ready formed for its reception. She gave information of séances, spirit visits and communications which aroused curiosity to

a feverish extent. Mediums were eagerly sought, and many were unscrupulous enough to descend to fraudulent methods by way of securing notoriety. This brought spiritualism again into disfavour and set the storm of criticism raging with renewed fierceness. So up to the present day has it raged, swelled, died out and raged again. But happily for itself the movement has become strong enough to stand on its own merits. The merits not of phenomena, or possible trickery, but of scientific proof that it is a real existing bridge of communication between the so-called dead and the ostensible living. Possibly no exposition of spiritualism as a comfort and a truth has been greater than that afforded by the calamity of this cruel war, for the terrible griefs and losses it has occasioned seemed to advocate any possible means of consolation.

The means answered to the demand. Thousands of mourners and inquirers threw off the reticence of past days and stepped

boldly into the limelight of public service. For confession of belief in an unpopular subject *is* a public service. It is also one that needs the bravery of such men as Sir Oliver Lodge, and Sir Conan Doyle, and Sir William Crookes to attest and affirm by warrant of personal research and personal communication. But alas! the higher the authority the greater merit in stoning it. And lesser minds are always ready to do that.

What Sir Oliver Lodge has explained of the " passing on " of his son Raymond, killed in the war at the early age of twenty-six, has been a relief and consolation to innumerable other mothers and fathers of heroic sons; that crowd of young and martyred heroes whose sacrifices were so glorious, and whose lives should be deathless in the memory of a grateful country. And these revelations of the renowned scientist in no way differ from experiences produced by the means of other mediums, or the visions of other clairvoyants.

Usually at a public séance the audience sit

in a circle. The room is darkened, not altogether dark, but shaded to a certain dimness on account of required "conditions." If those who attend begin to inquire "Why—conditions?" they are much in the same position as the negative and positive forces of electricity, which might demand "Why negative and why positive?"

"Why do we live? Why do we think? Why do certain things please and certain things terrify?"

Sufficient for present purpose to say that all séances are subject to certain conditions which are dictated to the medium by the special guide or control who is responsible for the manifestations. Why there should be a special guide or control is due to the fact that the medium is used for the transmission of power, just as any implement of mechanism is used by the operator. She (or he) cannot be left to the random control of untrustworthy forces while in "trance," and trance is usually the condition into which conscious-

ness passes during the time of demonstration.

There is nothing alarming about the "trance condition." It is a sort of sleep, attended by passive submission to another form of energy. While the medium is in this sleep her "control" speaks and acts for her, and gives both description and message from the visiting "spirits," who seem only too anxious to use this method of communication. Is there any reason why they should not use it if they have found themselves shot, as it were, into another world, another form of existence, while still keenly and vigorously attached to this? According to the messages of Raymond, there are crowds on the "other side" longing and trying to get a message through to the world they have left; suffering perhaps from remorse, or regret, or love forfeited and foregone; separation they had not desired. And if this is so the need of mediums is amplified, for strange as it may seem, the nearest and dearest of earthly loves may be quite insensible to the spiritual mani-

festation of the loved one who has passed from the earth plane.

Does not Raymond tell of standing by his favourite brother's side, *tapping him on the shoulder,* as was a habit while on earth, and yet that brother was perfectly unconscious of touch or presence?

So when the sceptic asks "*why* darkness?" or "*why* mediums?" the answer is that only certain psychic powers are possible for use, or demonstration, and those who possess these powers offer themselves—sometimes unconsciously—to the world beyond this world, and those of its inhabitants who are anxious to prove the continuation of existence manifest through this mediumship.

At a public séance, then, the entranced medium is used by the various visitants, who speak to the inquirers through the medium's "control." Sometimes an accurate description is given of the communicating personality, built up in earth form for purpose of recognition. Sometimes only a

name or a message comes through. Sometimes out of twenty or thirty people only half-a-dozen may receive any personal communication. The remaining number then get offended, and declare: "It's all nonsense, there's nothing in it." For no passion is stronger than self-interest, and to be overlooked when bent on investigation is a personal affront to the investigator.

The antagonist and the scoffer can hardly expect to enter into the required condition. An open mind, a reasonable curiosity, these offer no discordant elements. "Ask, and ye shall receive" is typical of more than a text of selfishness. Spiritual bread is for spiritual hunger. Those already replete with scepticism, obstinacy, and self-conviction are not troubled by such hunger. The banquet has no attraction for them.

III

Manifestations

This word, with the dictionary significance of disclosure, exhibition, revelation, is used by spiritualists and mediums to illustrate the various happenings of a séance. In the very early beginnings of spiritualistic discoveries the "manifestations," as in the case of the Fox family, took the shape of knocks, raps and incessant noises for which no physical explanation seemed possible. The theory of "earth-bound" spirits attached still to a material world had not then received attention. When it did, it was ruthlessly classed as *diablerie;* power of the evil one; something to be shunned and avoided. But mankind has learnt that to avoid an unpleasant subject does not eliminate that subject from its unpleasant existence.

Nothing, whether of good or evil, is without reason for such a condition. A lie lives,

not by reason of its necessity but by the very malevolence which has created and prompted its first incarnation. The two sides of the question of spiritualism are those of affirmation and denial. On the one hand stand those who insist upon the truth of psychic power and psychic manifestation. On the other, those who deny both as "impossible," "spookish" or "dangerous."

It is dangerous to handle the live wire; to tamper with the electric force; to investigate the secrets of nature; but lacking the courage to do these things, where would mankind be now? How could we have girdled the earth and sounded the depths of the sea? How chained the forces of the electric current? How learnt to use the air as a mode of progression, the etheric waves as transmitters of unspoken words? Nature is as an open book to the seeker; a closed and stubborn holder of secrets to the bigoted and superstitious.

The demonstrative power of those forces

which had made their existence known on the physical plane was a power seriously hampered by earth conditions.

Although they could see, they remained unseen; although they seemed to speak their voices were inaudible. The world they had left behind was not a world whose conditions assimilated with that to which they had been transferred.

The religious fallacies which had assumed that translation to " spirit life " meant a sudden inrush of wisdom, all-seeingness, and an immediate knowledge of the Godhead proved utterly wrong. The journey heavenward had only commenced; it was not accomplished.

This is where the Church has made such a grievous error. It asserts that death is *followed* by an ascension into spiritual realms, or plunges its victims into the horrors of purgatory or hell-fire! Spiritualism teaches that nothing of the sort occurs. The soul of man is still *the man.* Only instead of

material bondage it has been granted spiritual revelation. But the revelation may not be of a sort to please its discoverer. For as in a mirror he sees *himself*, and recognises the ills he has wrought or the good he has tried to accomplish. He discovers, too, that he must still work; still exist; and that only by his own efforts can he attain a higher degree of spirituality.

With the first discovery of *life-continuance* is it unlikely that the entity might wish to return to the physical plane and by some means communicate its presence or its powers? And supposing such permission were granted (as in the case of Adelaide Procter's beautiful poem), what would this entity be likely to do to impress those it visited? Give or transmit some message of comfort.

Death has been surrounded with so much of terror that a reappearance (in the astral form, common to all) would only create alarm, and produce the usual furore of dis-

belief and scoffing. The entity has learnt this in the physical world and sadly applies the knowledge to present conditions. But there are many entities, stubborn, wicked, passionate, whose desire to manifest *something* might enable them to produce phenomena such as many of us have lamented at a spiritualistic séance; might enable them to use the medium for an unworthy purpose, and bring about those sounds and appearances which have puzzled inquirers. That much-abused "dark cabinet" with its concealed mysteries does not impress the true spiritual seeker. In fact he regards such demonstrations with aversion. Phenomena are lamentably familiar to all engaged in psychical research, but it rather humiliates than convinces. Having seen much of table-turning, tambourine-playing, rope-tying, and materialisation, I admit that such things are possible, but in no way important.

They are of interest to the curious but not to the earnest seeker. They are a proof of

the earth-bound forces whose release from physical conditions has not elevated what was spiritually deadened by an earth life. They are a proof of possible communication; they are—in a way—as useful as the vision of seer and sage were useful in olden times, but to those who are seriously investigating the subject of the after-life they are *anathema*. They are simply an outcome of the mechanism produced in that lower workshop of psychic existence which has exacted a life tribute and is using it for its own ends. But it is no use to say they are impossible, or are proofs of fraud. For they have been tested again and again, though to what purpose they exist and why they attach supernormal importance to themselves is for those who encourage them to say.

IV

Materialisation

This phenomenon deserves special mention and forms one of the greatest attractions of the séance room.

It really means that during the state of trance-mediumship various forms and shapes build themselves up into visible significance, and show themselves to the circle as capable of movement and speech and recognition.

How is it done? asks the sceptical inquirer.

The medium will tell you that during trance-unconsciousness the control permits that unconsciousness to be used by the spirit who desires to manifest. From the side of the medium a thin, slender cord is drawn; this seems to take to itself a certain power of radiating ethereality, and gradually builds up the shadowy yet distinct appearance of a visible being.

The process of this "building up" does not take place before the eyes of the circle,

but within the cabinet or behind the screen which conceals the entranced medium.

Of course this very secrecy and aloofness lend themselves to any interpretation of fraud on the part of the medium. It is a rather uncanny business at its best, and after witnessing many such exhibitions one is reduced to that frame of mind which exclaims *cui bono?* and throws aside further research.

I have seen materialised forms at public séances, and I have seen them produced in my own room and by an unprofessional medium under test conditions. Usually the spirit form showed itself as some Eastern personality, white-robed, turbaned, with flowing beard, and of majestic presence. I always felt it would be quite easy for the medium to drape and disguise himself and then appear in front of the cabinet, for the room would be in almost total darkness, and the "circle" were requested to sing or talk during the period of transformation.

No message was ever delivered of any im-

portance, nor could I see that the phenomena produced were in any way remarkable enough to excuse the apparent suffering and exhaustion of the medium.

I have been told that the class of medium used for spiritual materialisation are never long-lived, and rarely enjoy good health.

I am not surprised. The condition of trance may be harmless, even as hypnotism is harmless, but excessive use of the faculty must have a bad effect upon the nervous system and occasion organic disturbance.

Having investigated the "material" side of the subject both at public and private séances, I came to the conclusion that there was something not only unsatisfactory, but humiliating, about these exhibitions. I did not *want* to distrust the professional medium, but, on the other hand, I could get no satisfactory explanation of the why and wherefore of these powers; or of their use as arrayed against their danger.

Of course public séances are paid for, but the circle is usually small and the fees are not high enough to make even a professional trickster rich. Human vanity and that quaint egoism which loves to prank and play before its fellow-men may be responsible for such exhibitions, but to the serious-minded they only surround the subject with confusion.

The real use of authentic materialisation would be to prove that theory of *continuance* of mental and moral attributes distinguishing the manifesting entity on the other side, as it may have distinguished him on this; to show that man does not change, he continues.

When he has learnt his lesson, when atonement and realisation have built up another temple of life on the foundation stone of the past (or of many pasts), then will fuller knowledge mean higher power and the spirit grow and increase in wisdom and in stature of a purer faith.

MATERIALISATION

A form of "manifestation" lately favoured and encouraged is that of the spirit voice rendered audible and giving coherent messages through "the trumpet," as it is called.

The said trumpet is a thin cylinder or cone about two feet in height; hollow and without any sort of mechanism.

This trumpet is placed on the floor; the circle sit around; the medium takes her place, the room is darkened, and after an interval of singing or talking (in order to produce certain vibrations) a voice will proceed from out the trumpet and announce itself as that of the medium's control.

The medium in this instances does not go into trance conditions, but talks and listens to the "voices," as do the rest of the audience. The "control" having announced its personality and greeted the circle in friendly fashion proceeds to inform them that various "spirit friends" are present and are desirous of communicating. In order to do this

the trumpet moves round the circle until it reaches the side of the person for whom it has the message. It then knocks softly against their knees, and from out of it proceeds a voice announcing the identity of the speaker and its readiness to talk with them, or advise them, or give proof of identity.

All this seems very bald, and possibly irreverent, taken in conjunction with the sorrows of bereavement. But to those who are seeking for a conviction of identity or a message that may lighten their dark hours it has proved a real source of comfort. More than that, these spirit voices have given information as to obligations and duties left unperformed while on earth; have asked for prayers and memory, and besought the mourner not to grieve over a "temporary" separation. Real names of the departed have been announced, and sometimes quite a conversation has ensued.

"A trick," says the sceptic. "It is the medium speaking, and the medium takes

good care to know the private affairs of those joining the circle. The messages are 'faked' for the occasion. Deception is easy, and ventriloquism may account for the different voices that seem to come out of the trumpet." Very well. If the sceptic is not to be convinced, nobody troubles. He is at liberty to investigate and disbelieve and theorise to his heart's content. But when one of the sitters receives a message, or is informed of the presence of *someone* whom he or she *alone knows*, when proof is given that that message or that speaker is actually a voice or visitant from the spirit world, then it takes more than the sceptic's sneer or the scoffer's ridicule to alter such conviction.

The trumpet séances which I have attended have always been at some private house where trickery or fraud was almost impossible. The theory of ventriloquism has often been raised by members of the circle bent on inquiry and refusing to be convinced. But even arguing that the medium resorted

to such a trick, it would not enable her to give authentic names, or messages, or *proof* of the spirit visitant's presence.

To the oft-asked question, "Why should they want to come back once they have passed over?" we can only assume that the change of address is not conclusive evidence of change of identity; that the attraction of earth is strong enough to draw them within its circumference, and once there to make them try any reasonable method of getting into communication with friends they have left behind. And once more I repeat that such desire and such effort are the strongest proofs of identity. Their very simplicity, or, as the scoffer calls it, "stupidity," shows that the ego is *unchanged.* It is, as yet, no wiser or better informed than when it left the earth plane. It has found itself in a new habitation, or, as I said before, with a "change of address," but it knows itself as it knew itself before the change, and has to reconcile that self to a new form of life gradually and not

always gladly. There are very sorrowful spirits and very regretful ones who sometimes return, but they had their chances on earth, and the burden of regret has to lessen itself of selfish failings ere it can know peace.

Time, as it exists on earth, has no meaning on the " other side." Man has ample opportunity to repent and atone, and no one but has work to do, or a mission to accomplish.

This has been told and written and impressed again and again. The simple, boyish revelations of " Raymond " are only an echo of thousands of other revelations, messages, and confidences through the opening door. It is not quite open yet, but the aperture is widening. In any case so much evidence is now procurable that few who give serious attention to the subject can help being convinced that there is " something " in it. That spiritualism is not a cult for eccentrics and tricksters, but a real, tangible, holy thing.

There is no need to pursue it by phenomenal methods. No need to take what one feels

is sacred to the chances of a public séance, or even the uncertainties of a private one. The ordinary meetings of the Spiritual Alliance Society are as reverent and regularly attended as any church service. Nothing disturbing or illusionary is attached to these meetings.

The speakers may speak in trance condition; they often do; but the addresses are so fervent, so heart-stirring, and, above all, so *rationally* comforting that no one, however bigoted or "Churchy," could possibly take offence at them. In like manner the prayers are no formal parrot-like repetition, for ever the same the year through, but improvised inspiring expressions of the holiest thoughts and the purest ideals.

Believer or sceptic cannot but be assured that this place of meeting and association is holy ground, and that absence of all ceremonial is but an incentive to a higher form of spirituality.

V

Automatic Writings

Automatic writing is a peculiar form of mediumship, and, as far as has been discovered, a more dignified and reliable one than "raps" or phenomenal disturbance.

Granting that the personal entity finds itself in another state of existence, not through vicissitudes of age, or sickness, but by accident, or even crime, would not its thoughts at once revert to the earth it had left, the people it had known? With such thoughts it is not unnatural to suppose an intense desire to inform these people of its continued existence. Attending this desire might come a sudden realisation of possibility. The power of thought on the "other side" seems as magnetic as the power of will. The entity who has "passed over" suddenly finds it *is* back on earth, and in that special home or presence where it desired to be. But

alas! circumstances are irrevocably changed. The spiritual form has no substance or visibility; the spiritual voice cannot proclaim its presence. It may touch and speak, but all in vain. Sadly enough it has to learn of a psychic body as once it had to acknowledge a physical one.

Let us figure to ourselves such a personality returning whence it came, saying to itself: "It is no use. They cannot see, or hear, or be convinced." Saying this, and recognising this, and then suddenly hearing from some spirit friend that the reason of non-communication might rest with the subject, not the seeker. "If you adopt the right methods you can get your message through; come with me and I will show you the way."

Here we have the mystery as well as the reason for those "guides" and "controls" without whose aid no mediumship is satisfactory. The spirit who has learnt the way teaches the stranger to find it also. But as mediums are few and rare, and spirits num-

berless, it is only natural to suppose that communications are difficult to " get through."

The power of affecting a *physical* personality on the " other side " is attended by similar difficulties as the power of affecting a *spiritual* one on this.

There seems to be a popular belief that to " spirit " all is possible once it has passed into the region of the spirit world. It should at once be able to see, hear, know and experience all the mysteries of the spiritual kingdom. But this is not so. The spirit does not become all-wise, all-perfect, or all-powerful. It remains, at first, very much as it was on earth, unless *while* on earth it has developed the spiritual side of being to an extent that leaves it indifferent to any memory or affection of the material plane it has left.

There have been personalities so pure-minded and so almost sinless that the " passing over " would mean only a higher grade of spirituality, but such natures are rare.

The generality of spirit passengers are

not lost to memory; are often troubled by the sorrow that follows their exit, and long for some means of assuring those they have left that they are still unchanged.

One such means has proved to be what is called automatic writing. Sometimes the discovery has been purely accidental. Sitting at a table and with pen or pencil in hand, idly waiting for some idea, or subject for a letter, the chosen agent suddenly finds herself (or himself) writing rapidly and continuously without conscious volition. When read the communication proves to be some message from a known or unknown person who has passed over to the world beyond. Or again the writer is conscious of an uncontrollable desire to seize writing materials and await results. The pencil may remain stationary for a few moments, or perhaps only a few seconds. Then it proceeds to fly over the paper at a rapid rate, transcribing words and sentences of which the writer is ignorant. Usually the name of the impelling scribe is

given. The messages are often long, lucid, and personal. They serve to convince the physical transmitter that the communicating source is someone known and loved, who has been allowed this means of communication.

In this method there is no need of a medium. The spirit force operates for itself on the submissive force it has discovered. It seeks to convey through a passive agent what it cannot write or voice for itself.

The charge brought against such a discovery as power of automatic writing is, of course, the usual one of self-deception. " The writer does it unconsciously." (As if anyone on the physical plane can be *actively* unconscious.) " It is quite impossible any departed spirit could return and use such a means of communication." That is as may be.

It has been my good fortune to witness a great deal of this automatic power. I have also received personal messages through the unconscious scribe. I have had names given

and information retailed that were quite private, rapidly written and handed to me by the writer. (A curious feature of this phenomenon is that the *handwriting* is often extraordinarily like, if not identical with, that of the personality we have known.)

The subject used as a transcriber is often quite commonplace and not conscious of any psychic powers. The feeling seems an impulse not of self-will but of some authoritative agency apart from oneself. Just as on this earth plane we say to a friend, "Here, come, I want you," and dictate the service required, so does this mysterious force call and use the obedient subject of its desires.

Many a family circle has rejoiced at the discovery of this power in some one member of the household. Many a message of comfort has been received of which the outside world knows nothing. In rare instances the communications are allowed to be published, if they are of a general or instructive nature. In others the writer is warned to keep both

the power and the information secret. They seem holy as prayer is holy, as faith is holy. The scorn of the scoffer is hateful as it is fatuous.

Automatic writing is not to be confounded with spirit writing. That has been done again and again at private séances. The method is as follows.

The medium places a sort of double slate upon the table. It is shown to the sitter as perfectly clean. He is even permitted to use a damp sponge and pass it over the surface. This slate possesses a hinge and a lock. The small piece of pencil is put between two halves as it were. The slate is closed, locked and the key placed upon the table, or, if preferred, given to the sitter. The medium then holds the locked slate under the table and after a few moments withdraws it. The sitter unlocks it and finds the inner surface covered with writing.

Another method is that the sitter is told

to write a question to which he desires an answer. He writes it himself, unseen by the medium, locks the slate and hands it back.

The same thing occurs. A brief interval, the unlocking of the slate, and there is the answer, written under the question.

How is it done?

There is no darkness. The medium's right hand is on the table. Could he with the left only unlock, write, and relock the slate without sound or movement being discoverable by the sitter?

But still this and similar feats only come under the heading of "phenomenal happenings." They may be the work of a set of "elementals" so called. Beings who are strongly attached to the earth plane. Who were of no very high order of intelligence while there. Who want to manifest some power, if only in trickery or mischief. Beings who owe a personal grudge to some order of humanity and find that raps and noises and the flinging of missiles and disturbance of

furniture is one way of disconcerting them. "Evil spirits" if you will, but still spirits, and bringing proof not only of continuation of active life, but of possible malice; of a vindictive memory determined on reprisals.

The true spiritualist has no use for such manifestations. He knows they are possible of accomplishment, are eagerly sought and criticised, but his aspirations go forth to that higher plane where deeper truths are manifested. As much as it is possible to learn of such truths he sets himself to learn, knowing that death is but a transition, and that the personality he has known and loved is only as it were in another country to which he himself is progressing.

A natural interest in that country, in what it means of duty, memory, usefulness is surely allowable. The spiritualist seeks such things here, while the materialist says: "Sufficient the day to the evil thereof." For to the materialist death *is* an evil; a thing to dread and avoid. What comes after physical

decease is of less interest to him than the fact of such decease, the knowledge that it puts an extinguisher upon the flame of life, and sets at naught all schemes, hopes and ambitions connected with life.

When the fact of automatic writing is first discovered it is rather puzzling. The writer is not quite sure whether the words are not of personal invention, although they have no apparent personal meaning. The impulse to write at some unexpected moment is the only thing the scribe cannot account for. Gradually the impulse becomes a habit and the communications a dictated formula. Sometimes one special agent announces itself and continues to come and use the hand of the writer as a method of transmitting messages.

Recently a book of experiences entitled *Letters from a Living Dead Man* has made some stir in the world of psychic research. The letters are all from the " other side " and written down by the author as given. They form an interesting record of what happens

on that " other side " when the spirit entity goes thither. The entity uses his automatic subject as a means for informing those he has left behind of his personal experience and condition. Not only do these letters deal with the war, with the sudden translation from life to death, but also with the laws of nature on another plane, and the possibilities of spirit communion.

Like Raymond, the ego of the communicator is in no way changed. It is perfectly recognisable and perfectly simple. It relates what happened and is happening around it, and is essentially grateful for the power of communicating what it has learnt of the great mystery.

There are plenty of books and authorities on this matter. Anyone interested can consult them or criticise them as they please. If they prove nothing else, I once more repeat that they prove that death is *not* extinction of the personality we have known and loved; that mental activity continues on the " other side "; that the physical body is not necessary

for communication so long as a chain of mental telepathy exists between spirit and matter.

Once earthly limitations are dispensed with the spiritual force is conscious of new powers, new possibilities. There seems no location in space nor any hampering methods of transit. Thought is both messenger and locomotive. To wish for a presence is to be with it, and the joy of finding a means of communication is a joy that sets all earth's grim prejudices at defiance.

There is no death in the sense of irrevocable loss; of dissolution; of self-surrender. There is a passing-on, a continuance, a purpose. And the spiritual world is coming nearer and the ways and methods of communication are becoming plainer.

The powers of evil will be fought on other ground than that of slaughter and barbarity. The body may yet be made the servant of the soul, not the slave of its physical elements in a world of physical bondage.

VI

Explanation and Demonstration

Nothing worth knowing or discovering has ever yet found acknowledgment without opposition. Humanity, though condemned to merely physical conditions, is not all on the same level of intelligence. There are higher and lower grades; there are powers, gifts, possibilities known to the few, ignored by the many. It was only in the early part of the century that the Western mind at last interested itself in the doctrine of reincarnation long held by the Eastern; the theory that man lives and relives his earth life in many varying forms of personality.

How does this theory (or fact) fit in with the evidences of spiritualism? If the spirits of the dead are giving proof of continued existence on another plane, how can the ego they represent be also another ego who dates

existence back to the times of the Pharaohs, or the nativity of Buddha the Enlightened?

The answer seems to me a very simple one. *All* spirits do not manifest or desire to manifest. Out of the millions upon millions who have passed from physical life how trivially *few* have ever troubled to give proof of continued existence. The reason for this is that they have learnt their lesson; learnt the meaning of life, of physical obligation, of duty, of love, of service. When death delivers them from a *repeated,* not a primitive, bondage, they are conscious of new powers; an upliftment of psychic force; a desire for more glorious and spiritual experiences. They know too that the world they have left is bound to accomplish its destiny, as in every age and under every condition mankind has striven to accomplish his.

The spirit that has proved itself a worthy custodian of past knowledge has no desire to return to the bondage of physical life, and being fully conscious that ties of love

and sympathy are merely loosened, and will never be severed, there seems no reason for further demonstration.

"In my Father's house are many mansions" is a text of higher meaning than the Salvation Army or the Evangelical Church allow for it. For "mansions" read spiritual conditions; an ascent to ever greater saintship; a spiritual resting-place ere the summons to "go forth" is repeated. Sectarian distinctions mean nothing. The Supreme Ruler and Giver of Life is unaffected by anything but the reverent sincerity of worship. Therefore spirits of a high order do not wish to return to the material plane, or even to offer proof of existence because already *they know* what to others is hidden.

Thus it is that demonstrations of a mysterious power from the other side are left to an order of spiritual intelligence more concerned with what it has left than what it has reached; earth-bound and attached to physical joys and physical existence, and therefore

anxious for a renewal of acquaintanceship, so to say, with those it has left behind.

The approach to the spiritual plane is not so jealously veiled but that it may be glimpsed—or, as clairvoyants say, " sensed " —from the material. A bridge of communication does actually extend between the two, though not all may cross, still less perceive it. But this bridge stretches forward and upward to such grand and unimaginable realms of enlightenment that few dare pursue its seemingly endless expansion.

(This information has been given through mediumistic influence and also by automatic writing.)

Some spirits are allowed, even sent forth, to demonstrate their mission, and to prove to the reverent-minded and earnest seeker the truth of spiritual knowledge.

The recognition of the theory of evolution has abolished many myths and much bigoted ignorance. Even the Church, once Darwin's strongest opposer, has reluctantly stepped

down from its seven-days theory of creation and its passionate upholding of "miracle" to the level of scientific proof.

There is purpose in all Nature; in its works, its developments, its mysteries and its revelations.

The object of religion seems to have been to sever man from Nature; to educate his spiritual possibilities as against his normal tendencies. In plain words, to thrash out the animal instead of to train it. "Cast forth," "abolish," "*hate* sin"; "trample evil under foot"—such are the mandates of the Church. How far has it succeeded in implanting them either by example or declamation?

Most of those who have been attracted to the study of spiritualism by so-called "wonders" soon weary of such puerile exhibitions.

Florence Marryat wrote a book full of her own experiences. Spirit forms appeared from dark cabinets, moved furniture, played on musical instruments (very badly), flung

freshly gathered flowers into the laps of the sitters, rapped out messages, gave their names and identities, and in fact proved very disturbing associates up to the period of her death. There are numberless records of such happenings. Undoubtedly they have been and *are* given. But it is no wonder that the sceptic asks: "What *use* are they?" "What do you learn?" "What do they tell you of the next world?"

From personal experience I can only answer they tell you nothing of the "next" world—*because they possess no more knowledge of it than they did on this earth plane.*

Such an answer may be a shock to the inquirer, for that belief in *immediate* spirit transformation dies hard. Every tombstone inscription is proof of that; every devotional hymn and obituary sermon. So we are confronted by the opinion that the manifestations received are *not* from the spirit world because spirits become glorified and wondrous beings the moment they pass on to the

next plane, or else that the force producing such manifestations must be evil.

For evil read "commonplace" and perhaps the problem is less puzzling.

What the manifesting power can do, it does; what it can reveal, it reveals; but whether through alphabetical raps, automatic writing or materialisation into visible form, the information given is only the *limited* information allowed to a special form of demonstration.

To those who find any comfort in such exhibitions, apart from their wonderfulness, the séance door is always open. They can go as often as they pay. They can have John King, a one-time pirate, thunder forth his greetings. They can receive the blessings of a cardinal or the prophetic warnings of a Napoleon. They can hear Shakespeare and Milton and other literary lions roar gently and vaguely of their "happy" condition. But if from these great authorities they receive any special information as to their pres-

ent life and habitation they will be more fortunate than I have been.

The explanation of what I call "commonplace" communications is also that of faulty or commonplace mediumship. It is an extraordinary fact that psychic powers are almost always displayed by a very low order of intelligence.

In the present day a whole stream of demoniacal manifestation has been let loose upon puzzled villagers in Wales and Somerset and Ireland. These unaccountable raps and disturbances, trance conditions and phenomenal exploits are retailed as "spiritual" facts by the eager journalist or the scoffing leader-writer. They are nothing of the sort. They are a display of "elemental" existence such as we do not readily recognise, for it has no place in the Burial Service or the pulpit. It is a confutation of the one life, one death theory, which must ere long give way to the more sensible acknowledgment of "one form of life, one form of death."

Out of evil good cannot come. Out of an unspiritual life no pure-winged seraph springs into immortal glory. Such immortality and such glory are for the pure in heart; the spiritual pilgrim as he progresses towards the Temple of Destiny.

I have had long conversations with mediums respecting their power of clairvoyance and their ability to act as interpreters for spiritual visitants. They have told me their power comes to them quite unexpectedly. They find themselves able to go into trance condition when they wish to do so. They are then in a state of unconsciousness to the world around, and at the mercy of the special guide or "control" who has elected to use them. Through this power they perceive clairvoyantly what they describe. The scenes and persons are as visible as if on earth. This "control" is often spoken of as "guardian angel," "spirit guide" or the "helper." In any case no medium seems able to exercise

his or her powers independently of this mysterious assistance. Once in trance (which is seemingly a deep, quiet sleep) the medium gives out such information as her spirit guide relates to her. The guide tells of the various communicating personalities, describes their appearance, conveys their messages, and, so to say, puts them *en rapport* with the inquirer. The said inquirer can ask any questions he pleases. The "control" speaks through the medium, using her voice and exacting her energy.

Why some people should have this power and others not is impossible to explain. But mediums are not many, especially those whose record is absolutely trustworthy. Sir Oliver Lodge explains this subject in his book *Raymond* and also in *The Survival of Man.* He was fortunate enough to secure a very excellent medium for his investigations, and whatever the reader may think of "Feda" (the control), she seemed to give very full and very accurate information re-

specting the boy whose early death had been so terrible a blow to his mother and family generally.

To myself, as an investigator, the interesting part of this special episode lies in the fact that Raymond *knew* of his father's interest in spiritualism, knew of his writings on the subject, and on recovering from that long sleep, or rest, which had been his condition *after physical death,* his first thought was to speak to him by this means and acquaint him with his present condition as proof of spiritual survival.

He did not find this easy at first. He had to seek for means and gain the help of friends already departed. One of his father's friends, a very psychic individual who had done a great deal for the cause of spiritualism while on earth, came to his aid. (Myers.)

Naturally the bereaved father was equally anxious to get into communication with his son. It would be not only consolation, but proof—proof of what he had upheld, and ex-

plained, and for sake of which he had achieved a vast amount of unpopularity. In order to prevent anything like fraud Sir Oliver arranged for his sittings anonymously. His wife did the same, and to *both*, through the agency of two distinct and separate mediums, came perfectly authentic messages from their son Raymond.

Having conquered the first difficulty on *his* side of sending his communication through another power, the boy became a frequent and intelligible visitor. He seems to have been aided at first by Myers (his father's friend), but he soon learnt to be independent. The records of the various sittings, both of Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge, make very interesting reading, and completely do away with that oft-repeated accusation that those who profess to return from the "other side" can tell us nothing about it.

Raymond tells a very great deal about it, and in so natural and simple a manner that it is more convincing than clerical theories.

Still more convincing is the fact that one is able to recognise the frank, boyish personality, the fun and humour of youth unexhausted by new conditions.

The limitations of a new experience and the difficulties of reconciling them with preconceived ideas of the next life are set forth in plain words. All inquirers have met with such obstacles. But as the sittings continue the communications get longer and more explicit. The medium's queer little " control " becomes on personally friendly terms with the young soldier. She recognises him at once and is always ready to convey what he wishes through the medium. A great deal of what is transcribed is only personally interesting to the speakers, but so far as proof is possible it is convincing proof of the identity of the spiritual Raymond with the earthly Raymond. Gradually his brothers and sisters grew interested in the accounts given and the possibility of communications. As the messages " get through " (to use the

boy's own words) he finds himself able to give tests in his own home. Still, he often complains of difficulty, arising from confusion in the minds of the sitters, and the change from one medium to another. Also his memory is not always dependable. He himself speaks of it as only helping "now and again." But family information such as dates of birthdays, holiday trips, pets, boyish possessions and experiments are perfectly accurate.

In the home circle the sittings were at a table and the communications by raps, as the alphabet was spelt out. This is a somewhat tedious process, but through it Raymond's sister Honor was found to be a medium. Records were kept, and the very natural, light-hearted methods of transmission were striking proofs of the identity of the spirit boy with the one who had been so deeply mourned. Raymond was Raymond still.

. . . . . .

It was at one of those private sittings that uestion was asked (which every seeker

longs to ask): "What is the name of the sphere in which you are living?" The answer came as "Summerrlodge." The note-taker wrote it down as "Summer. R. Lodge." In a previous communication it had been given as Summer Land. The sitters had expected this reply to be spelt out, but the word "Summer," a stop, and then the boy's own name to complete the sentence was what they received.

Another later communication speaks of a "very high sphere" where a sister (who had passed over as a child, and also a baby brother) had gone on. Yet "they do not go too far to communicate; never so far that they cannot meet you when you too pass over." The message continues: "You gravitate here to the ones you're fond of. Those you're not fond of, if you meet them in the street, you don't bother to say 'How do you do?'"

Question. There are streets then?

Answer. Yes. Streets and houses. . . . You gravitate to the place you are fit for. There's no judge and jury. You just gravitate; like to like. . . . Learn to help yourself and immediately you are helped. . . . no unfairness or injustice. . . . A common law operating for each and everyone.

Question. Are all of the same rank and degree?

Answer. Rank does not count as a virtue. High rank comes by *being virtuous.* . . . All go on to the astral plane first, just for a little.[1]

It is at this same sitting (4th Feb. 1916) that Raymond gives his first serious descrip-

[1] The astral plane is, according to Theosophists, an exact but more beautiful representation of the earth plane, even as the astral body is a duplication of the physical body it has left behind at the moment of death. At death this astral (or spiritual) counterpart escapes into the world above its own. "Above" must be interpreted in order of spirituality not of location. The evolution of man from the animal has been followed by the evolution of man *into* the spiritual. Science and spirituality need not be kept in separate watertight compartments. They will be proved to be perfectly reconcilable.

tion of the sphere to which he has passed. "Summerland," or "Homeland," it is called. "The very highest can visit you. It is sufficiently near the earth plane to be able to get to those on earth."

Then he proceeds: "Mother, I went to a gorgeous place the other day. . . . I was permitted to see what was going on in the highest sphere. . . . I wonder if I can tell you what it looked like. . . . I felt exalted, purified, lifted up. I couldn't stand up. I *wanted to kneel.*"

The description of the vision he sees and the sensation it creates is almost too sacred for reproduction in these pages. The book is at hand and those interested in what I have said can read for themselves.

More "Raymond" *Explanations*

"It seems unfair that such crowds of fellows are coming over here in the prime of life. But for everyone who so passes dozens of people in the world below open their eyes

and *want to know where he has gone to.* . . . Then they begin to learn something. Before this loss they never thought seriously of the subject. Now they do. They say: 'He was so full of life, he must be somewhere. How can we find out?'"

It is this endeavour to "find out" which has brought upon spiritualism such an avalanche of abuse from the Press, such virulent condemnation from the pulpit. But no sorrowing mother whose own particular "Raymond" has been able to communicate with her, cares for outside criticism. The Church can give her no comfort, but spiritualism can and does.

She knows that in time the warring forces of materialism will be brought into subjection and that the sacrifice of manhood has in some measure been necessary for the purification of man.

A much discussed and violently criticised portion of the Raymond book has been that

in which he describes the various spheres to which he has had access. He is "learning the laws of such places and that it is possible to prepare for the higher spheres while living on the lower ones."

He describes buildings full of different lights; windows filled with coloured glass. He explains the meaning of the various colours and their influence upon *physical* as well as spiritual life. This is very remarkable, for many persons are affected by colour; and it has been found to have a healing as well as a malevolent influence on certain personalities.

Raymond speaks also of flowers blooming and passing out of life into life. "They do not decay as on earth."

He describes houses and streets, people and animals (those of the domestic kind peculiarly attached to man and used in his service). He feels the warmth of the sun, but it wears a different aspect. People are clothed at first as on earth, until they get

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accustomed to their new conditions, then they wear white robes of fine texture and quality, men and women alike. He goes on: "There are laboratories over here and they manufacture all sorts of things, not, as on earth, out of solid matter, but out of essences and ethers and gases."

"When they first come over they *want* things. Some want meat and some strong drink, and call for whisky and soda!"

What a shock to the preconceived idea of *immediate* spirituality which envelops the "passer on"! Possibly even a greater shock is the boy's naïve confession: "I want people to realise that it's just as natural as the earth plane."

But that is just what most people refuse to realise, refuse to believe. All the teaching of Christianity has been against it from childhood onwards. The next world will always be to the religionist a place of crowns and harps and winged forms; of some inexplicable reward for the penalties of physical suf-

fering and physical sorrow. The "next world" is always to atone for the imperfections of this; the next life to be one altogether "spiritual," even for the most debased and sinful of living creatures. There are life and death and the Judgment Day. Of any intermediate state or condition the Church and its followers will not allow. And the more theological the creed the more bigoted its adherents. Therefore it is that any such demonstration or revelation of the after-life as this chapter contains will not make the least impression upon any reader who considers his special Church, creed and cleric sufficient for all purpose of his soul's salvation. May his faith be rewarded!

VII

Certain Mediums and Certain Psychic Communications

The conviction that man exists is no less sure than that he persists—to the spiritualist. Religious folk say: "But of course! We believe that also."

They do not believe it in the same sense. They only credit man with one life, spent on the earth plane, and a spiritual *variation* but not extension of that life in the Christian heaven framed by the Book of Revelation and the assertions of St. Paul's 13th chapter of Corinthians.

When the vexed question of spiritualism arises in a so-called religious circle there will not be many voices raised in its defence. "You have no proof." "Mediums are frauds." "Table-turning is only trickery, and humiliating at that." "The Bible is the best guide, and the only reliable one."

I have always replied to such people:

" Well, let the subject alone. No one wants you to believe in it unless you yourself desire to do so."

The Spiritualist Association is not a violently proselytising body. I have not heard that it has Foreign Missions and salaried missionaries; that it blares and trumpets forth its principles at the street corners; that it erects expensive buildings (for which it cannot pay), and exacts pew rents and tithes and offertories from a long-suffering congregation.

Spiritualism is a religious belief that has been its own prophet, its own teacher, and its own supporter, and it has received a more than usual amount of the persecution and cynical criticism bestowed on any unorthodox form of faith.

The religions of the world are more than we can count. Each has its body of votaries; its special forms and ceremonies. Spiritualism is more a personal than a priestly matter. The inquirer is brought into touch with

certain communicating forces who assert their identity, claim recognition and declare that death is for them only a new and better form of life.

The *desire* to communicate with those from whom they are parted is at first very strong in most of those who "pass over." But as they learn of the barriers between the spiritual and physical world they reconcile themselves to waiting on a renewal of the friendships they have temporarily lost.

If everyone who had lost a relative or a friend possessed the powers of a medium there would be no barrier between death and life. But these powers are very rare, and not to be lightly regarded.

I give here a few questions I have put to a trance medium and the answers I have received:

Question. How did you discover you had this power?

Answer. Quite accidentally. I went, one evening, into a hall or meeting-room where

someone was lecturing on spiritualism. I was much impressed by what I heard, and still more impressed by the " spirit delineations " given at the close of the address.

Question. What do you mean by " spirit delineations "?

Answer. The lecturer stood there with closed eyes and spoke of forms he saw, standing by various people in the room. He described these forms with all their physical attributes, ages, and sometimes names. The special person for whom the spirit visitor came recognised it by the description. Sometimes a long message would be given by the medium, or some advice offered as to any difficulty or trouble.

Question. Would it not have been easy to " fake " such people? A general description of any elderly person would serve as grandmother or grandfather or parent for a good many people. And messages are usually vague enough to suit any case.

Answer. Some of the spirit forms were

children, or quite young people. No leading question was asked. They were simply described as being present. A few were so spiritually garbed and so beautiful that the medium could scarcely fit them into a word-picture.

Question. Did they give any information as to how they came, or from whence?

Answer. No; not unless specially asked. I have heard that deep spiritual feeling is a sort of chain formed by links of attraction. These links connect the living force with the spiritual world.

Question. Well, after this meeting what happened to yourself?

Answer. A spirit came to me and impressed itself as that of a very dear friend I had lost many years before. This spirit informed me (through the speaker) that I possessed clairvoyant faculties and could become a medium if I wished. I went home from the hall and told my husband what had occurred. He was so interested that he ac-

companied me to the next meeting. The same spirit came to me again. After the meeting was over we remained behind and spoke to the lecturer. We became friends and he advised me to try my powers. At first nothing happened. We sat at the table, and in a circle, and just waited patiently. Then, one evening, while talking to them (my husband and my lecturer friend) I went off into trance. I knew nothing of it. I simply became unconscious and so remained for a full quarter of an hour. It seemed to me that I went away into a long, long distance, saw my father and my spirit friend, and talked to them. Then I woke, and found myself still in my chair, in my own room, and saw my husband's anxious face. The lecturer friend had not allowed him to touch me. He felt that I was in trance conditions. After that the sensation became more frequent. I could see figures and faces and even hear voices, but not very distinctly.

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words were formed. At the rate at which her pencil moved no ordinary writing would have been legible.

There were several communications before I received any personal attention. Then came my name, and following it a long and somewhat elaborate message from a certain *royal* person who had not long passed over, whose death I had sincerely mourned, and who now assured me that there was a work I was specially desired to do, and could do, if only I would set prejudice aside and give my thoughts to it.

(I will take this opportunity of saying that but for that message the work I am now doing would never have been attempted.)

I resolutely disregarded the message. I had other sort of work on hand. I did not wish to mix myself up with spiritualism again, for I had dropped the subject in all its phases for many years. I said to myself: "I shall never write such a book. There are plenty better scribes and higher authorities

Question. Does it affect your health at all going into these trances?

Answer. No. My spirit guides take care of me. They know exactly when to send me off and when to awake me.

Question. Was there nothing to learn? Nothing to do? No sort of mental training required?

Answer. No. I think I am rather a simple-minded person. I was brought up in the Wesleyan faith. I had great belief in prayer. When I found this strange power had been granted me I accepted it as a duty. It seemed that people who mourned and suffered needed my help. I was glad to be able to give it them.

(This medium received no payment. Her services were given both at public meetings and by private appointments. What she saw and explained to myself of spirit friends was absolutely correct. Yet she knew nothing of me, not even my name, until I had proved her powers to my own satisfaction.)

Another Form of Mediumship

This next instance is concerned with automatic writing.

I discovered, quite by chance, that a lady who was a member of my club in London possessed this gift.

She told me that she had discovered it first by finding herself writing something of which she had no knowledge, and which her *hand seemed guided to inscribe.*

Sheet after sheet of paper was covered with some communication, and on reading it she found it was dictated by a relative who had been killed in the war. An account of his death, his " passing on " to the next sphere of existence, his feelings and his present conditions had been written by her hand under the guidance of a " spirit control," as in the case of trance mediumship.

She continued to test this power. She sat whenever the impulse came to her, merely taking up a pencil, laying her hand on a sheet of paper and awaiting results.

Communications came from all sorts of people, especially through the tragic years of the war. Her hand was used to write messages of comfort to unknown persons whose address she was directed to find. Information came to her from very high and notable folk whose names she had some delicacy in publishing. So when she did publish her little book of records she used merely initials in the work, but I have seen the original MS.

I asked her if she would let me sit with her one evening and see for myself this peculiar manifestation of psychic penmanship.

She readily consented. I spent two hours with her quietly in her own room, and after a little delay she told me the power was coming and asked for some sheets of paper. I put some clean foolscap on the table before her and watched the process.

I felt inclined to believe she knew what she was writing, just as one knows what is coming into a letter. The only difference was in the *extraordinary* rapidity with which

words were formed. At the rate at which her pencil moved no ordinary writing would have been legible.

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than myself." And so I put the thought of it away and with it the memory of that eventful evening.

Some three years later I met a lady who had just been reading a book of mine.[1] She told me that it had greatly impressed her, and the subject led us on to discuss various phases and forms of religion. She mentioned attending the meetings of the Spiritual Alliance Society in our neighbourhood, and spoke of the wonderful exhibitions of clairvoyance given there. Curiosity impelled me to go to the next meeting. I received no personal communication then, but on the second occasion the medium described a spirit form, the arms filled with papers which he was throwing into my lap. They were blank papers, unwritten on, but the messenger said they were "waiting my attention."

It struck me that the medium had learnt in the meantime that writing was my profession, and I sternly set myself to disregard

[1] *The Wrong End of Religion.*

the suggestion. But when I was quietly at home the idea pursued me; the impulse grew. The more I disregarded it the stronger it became. It was not the first time, nor I suppose will it be the last, that a special idea has forced itself upon my mind, and the plan of a special piece of work obsessed brain and thought to the exclusion of all else. I found, in this instance, it was better to give in than to resist, and so I set out to give my experiences on the subject of spiritualism.

It was not until I had started that I remembered the automatic message, and thought of the struggle to resist and the succeeding enforcement of the task.

This has been my sole experience of automatic writing. I have never come across any other person who possesses the gift though it has often been described to me.

Other Mediumship

Another medium whom I heard of and visited many years ago was an American, by

name Miss F.—a most ordinary, illiterate little person, but possessed of extraordinary psychic powers.

Her trance descriptions were very remarkable. She would sit down, yawn furiously for a few moments, then pass off into trance conditions. As soon as she was unconscious her guides took possession of her and communications began.

A voice spoke through her lips, but it was not her voice. That had possessed the shrill nasal intonation so peculiar to our transatlantic friends. The voice of the "control" was deep, manlike, authoritative. It gave me a perfectly correct description of my past life, health and family matters known only to myself. After a time it grew fainter and then ceased. Its place was taken by another voice totally different in timbre, and giving totally different information. The first voice had dealt with past affairs; the new one dealt with present and future happenings. I listened silent and somewhat fearful, my eyes

on the medium, who was breathing deeply and quietly. The communicating power described itself as being the channel through which *my own guide or guardian* was pouring forth its warning and its prophecies.

I had expected nothing of this sort. I felt alarmed and uncomfortable. What had been told me was of so private a nature on the one hand, and so uncannily possible on the other, that I wished myself out of the room and the influence of such mediumistic exhibition.

Then the voice ceased. The medium again yawned vigorously, opened her eyes and asked if I was satisfied? I said I was, and paid her fee of half-a-guinea, and went home.

Time passed. I had long given up the pursuit of spiritualism as an exhibition of marvels. I still read about it, and I was still interested in it, though the flock of thought-readers, crystal-gazers and séance-givers possessed no further attraction. But by degrees I began to find that certain events were happening in my life that had been foretold

in that American medium's little parlour. I found myself brought up, so to say, by sudden memories of what I had long forgotten. I halted on the roadway of life and took stock of past impressions. I asked myself whether it would be wiser to accept a warning or disregard it.

It seemed to me then, and I believe it still, that at certain times in our lives we receive special warning, or special guidance. It lies with us to believe or to reject.

The consequences of our decision affect our future in greater or lesser degree. We are at the cross-roads, the choice of the way, and very, very few of us make the right choice or take the right way. Sufficient to know in my own case that the special guide sent to warn me had good reason to do so. What of good or ill that has since befallen seemed of no possible avoidance at the time. They were experiences that meant life as I was to know life. What they meant of sorrow or suffering is what all

life means to the individual possessor of physical conditions.

I have visited other mediums, have witnessed strange manifestations of clairvoyant powers, but those I have specially described are those that made the deepest *personal* impression upon me, and they bring my psychic experiences almost up to date.

VIII

Perception and Theory

If spiritualism possessed no deeper meaning than its development of phenomena it would still possess the attraction of interest in something that has been unknown or rather undeveloped.

For no doubt there have always been mediums, just as there have been mysteries; always occult teachers, just as there have been those who required teaching.

Spiritual perceptions of a high order are not qualifications of ordinary humanity. Man on earth is far more concerned with material good and physical well-being than with a life which religion has hampered with disturbance, and the church has made as uninteresting as its own monotonous rubric.

The one beautiful and uplifting feature of Church ceremonies is music. That alone redeems the eternal monotony of intoned

ritual, and the dull and profitless delivery of sermons.

What the Church has failed to do is to make religion a subject of interest; to paint man's future as a canvas of varied colour, continuous change, and largely self-dependent.

Instead of this it has insisted that he was born in sin and is a child of evil, and has only been redeemed from *eternal* destruction by the sacrifice of a perfectly sinless being. When a child has had its inherited wickedness drummed into its small head, and when as an adult it has become used to the idea of transgression (to be atoned for by the vicarious sacrifice of a non-transgressor), is it any wonder that the spiritual outlook is darkened? It needs a vigorous rending of the veil to throw fresh light upon an unillumined indifference to spiritual matters. Sometimes this light is thrown by a sudden bereavement, a great sorrow, a personal recognition of disaster; the crumbling away of an edifice of

ambition or the pain and weariness of illness. Any or all of these things have at times recalled a man from despair to new hopefulness by showing him that physical life is at once the most unsatisfying and the most disciplinary of conditions. Once he has realised that fact his spiritual nature awakens and prompts him to fresh exertion, a better understanding of himself.

The converts to spiritualism have been mostly those who have suffered personal bereavement and failed to find any comfort in ordinary religious teaching.

There is no doubt that the séance room has brought thousands of curious and sceptical folk to investigate its mysteries, but the wise seeker for spiritual comfort soon learns to look upon "phenomena" as merely a demonstration of elemental powers anxious for notoriety and chained to the physical plane by the lower nature they never attempted to spiritualise while on that plane.

It only needs a little quiet thought to con-

vince oneself that out of the millions of beings passing out of this world every hour or moment of the day, very, *very* few are anything but commonplace, material and unspiritual. How can such people change immediately into sinless and glorified beings fit for the "Kingdom of Heaven" which the Bible promises as the reward of the "just made perfect"?

It is as well to remember that the promise is for those who are *made* perfect. The process may be one of the next life, or of many next lives, for the soul has a long journey before it reaches a final resting-place, and the opportunity of making itself "just" or "perfect" is not limited to one faulty human experience.

Taking civilisation as a mass, it is not an edifying spectacle. Far from it. It is full of selfishness, vice, immorality, injustice. It suits the preacher and the philanthropist to paint it in neutral colours of hopefulness; to put the best face, so to say, on what is ac-

knowledged as very, very bad, but they know in their hearts that the aggregate human being is a contemptible creature. One only wonders why he was created, and what his Creator means to do with him.

If death were finality for some of earth's inhabitants it would be a fitting end. One stands aghast before the possibilities of loathsome vice and brutal crime that are as second nature to the special personality they inhabit. And it is the wonder as to what *really* happens to such people that sets imagination hovering about and beyond the stereotyped finalities of religion.

Does spiritualism take us further afield or reveal any more than the Church and the preacher have set forth?

It does.

In the first place, it manifests a personal form of activity that we had supposed at an end.

In the next it has offered reasonable explanation of continued existence under

changed conditions—*that are not the conditions* we have hitherto recognised as only possible to the realms of spirit. Life means some sort of action. It cannot be stagnation, uselessness, monotony. The character of the ego imprisoned for a few years in the flesh has opportunity for repentance and for atonement. The one without the other seems purposeless. A vain remorse would mean an endless purgatory, and we are not justified in believing that the Creator is merciless to the faulty and most imperfect beings who were once "man in His own image."

If they were, man might well turn on Him and exclaim: "You made me. I did not ask it. Whose is the fault that I am imperfect?"

The natural and delightful revelations of Raymond (who seems to me as the young prophet of the advancing spiritualist movement) are fairly conclusive as to his place and actions in the next world. When he says

he is "proud to do the work appointed him," it seems to me that he is giving us on the earth plane the greatest comfort possible. For a *continued* existence of neither work, nor service, nor helpfulness would seem at once purposeless and incomplete. To *live* implies action of some sort. Death is surely a sleep, a rest, but not purposeless sleep; perpetual inactivity. And to anyone who has possessed special gifts, such as those of art, music, writing, poetry, invention, the cessation of creative power would be a sort of torture.

This theory carries me back to one of my own, given to me once while writing a book. It is that genius, interpreted as Art, has only manifested itself in some *repeated* form of what we call Art. There is no *new* Art, if the word symbolises music, sculpture, painting, poetry, drama.

We have had these things since the world began to proclaim itself "civilised." They have manifested themselves in varying de-

grees of perfection *throughout every generation.* They are the colour scheme of history; they mean the architectural beauty of past ages; they have meant the uplifting of the soul in gratitude for creative faculties. They have taught great truths, great lessons, and given purer joy than mere material existence could ever render to man. But all down the ages these forces have only been renewed, not re-created. If the theory of incarnation proves nothing else, it proves the continuation of genius in the soul of man as a means to an end. It proves that certain gifts, far from perishing by death, live on and on, and return and instruct mankind. It proves that the soul of genius re-inhabits the earth plane, starting where it left off, working on patiently and joyfully of fulfilment, yet never wholly satisfied, because never wholly perfect.

If there were any new art, anything as worthy to live and perpetuate itself as are music, poetry, sculpture, painting and

drama, the theory would fall to the ground. But there is none. They embody all of beauty and sense-satisfaction that the physical world desires. They are the grandest dower a man can receive; the most enchanting mistress his soul can worship. And in them he lives for others as well as for himself.

Imagination is less a gift than a memory. The mind of genius is but a sensitive plate of intellectual reciprocity. It creates anew what has been forgotten, remaking in more brilliant form the crude beginnings left unaccomplished. Instincts are no more original than life is original, and life is but the persistence of some active force developing into the many forms and varieties of personal existence. If the gift of genius has proved itself a persisting manifestation, does it not prove that the ego relives, and reincarnates, and continues to labour for the sake of others?

The architects of the Pyramids may have served as constructors of the great mosques

and cathedrals since raised as architectural wonders. The poets of the East, the great philosophers of Greece, the musicians of Italy and Germany, the great artists whose works crowd every art gallery of fame, have they not relived their art and continued it in varying degrees of excellence only hampered by conditions of a new civilisation?

It is a "fad" of critics and *dilettanti* to declare nothing that *is* of the present time can be so good as that which has been in the past. But putting critics and the *petits-maîtres* of artificial culture aside, Art has persisted in living and manifesting, and the very accusation of modern inferiority as compared with ancient perfection is but a proof of variation in the instrument selected to carry on the work; not a proof that Art is less glorious or less perfect.

And if one form of life persists, why not another?

We are not all equally gifted, but there are graces of mind, spiritual virtues, which

are worthy of being reincarnated, and *are* reincarnated. Love has never ceased to manifest. Neither has charity nor generosity; unselfishness or courage. If such virtues *go on* existing they must have a living agency to exemplify them. And if they persist and their agents persist there must be some good and sufficient reason behind such persistence.

Precepts are forgotten where examples are remembered. Everything that is good ennobles mankind. It does not perish with individual death, but persists as a manifesting power in other individual forces.

In some spirit communications the next world has been described as one of several spheres, each of a higher degree of spirituality. And the spirits who proceed to a higher plane after physical release are not always those who bore the best *earthly* record.

The hypocrite has a sorry time when he faces himself, and knows that others around him see that self as it is, not as what he

professed it to be. A very simple soul may take precedence of a very cultured one. It is the real good that counts; the decent life; the unselfish efforts.

But it will be said, the Church teaches all this, so does the Bible. No. The Church does not teach it as our spiritual visitants teach it. The Church browbeats its congregation with "authority." It insists upon a wearisome form of attendance. It preaches confusing and contradictory doctrines, such as the acceptance of the Trinity, the belief in creeds, the obedience to commandments which are rendered impossible to obey. And it tells you that "he that believeth *not* such things shall be damned." Which is not pleasant hearing, and drives many a terrified soul to some simpler form of faith.

With spiritualism one finds oneself in closer touch with the next world. The service soothes instead of terrifies; uplifts instead of humiliates. Nothing is forced on one's faith that that faith cannot accept. If the

spirit communications do not convince one of actual spirit messengers, there is no need to heed them. But such conviction is almost certain once the seeker rids himself of the mistaken idea that spiritualism is only a form of phenomena; a thing of "spooks" and tricks and humiliating exhibitions.

What end such things serve is well known, and who perpetuates them is well known. But as long as man holds that absurd idea that he passes from an actual, sordid, vicious or material life *straight* into the superiority of angelic aloofness, so long will he pour discredit upon a very humiliating proof that he is absolutely wrong in his opinion.

IX

Speculation and Verification

Oh! the mighty crowd that have rushed into the spirit world during the past four awful years!

What hopelessness and fears, what anguish and suffering have been born out of this war. What frightful passions were let loose; what hate has surged in human breasts till men had no thought but to slay or be slain; to avenge or to die.

How many of those who pictured these scenes, or witnessed them, have dared to follow those anguished souls on their next journey; have tried to believe that such trite words as heroism, courage, loyalty, stood for more than just the surface truth of horrors unnamable!

It had to be. That was all it was possible to say. A little common-sense, a few precautions, the acceptance of a great leader's warning might have stayed the threatened

torrent for a time, but the powers of evil were envious, and a flood of enmity had been let loose upon the empires of the world.

Whether such tragedies are determined for us, or whether we bring them on ourselves, none may rightly know.

Earth-bound prejudices held us. A few visionaries spoke of Armageddon. The prophecies of Daniel were evoked. Fear and trembling were upon the earth, and men and women hardly dared question of the morrow.

On one side stood a vast host pouring out every devilish device that perverted imagination had designed as "science," in the effort to maim, poison and crush out the life of another host. And both hosts called on the name of God and invoked His aid and His blessing on their deeds.

Has civilisation ever shown a stranger thing?

Victory, however it turned, was supposed to be God's blessing on the wanton brutality of warfare; on the ruthless destruction

of beings He had created, who had been baptized into his Church, taught his Scriptures, and were yet performing deeds that might have put the very Prince of Evil to the blush!

Such things pass finite understanding. It is all very well for statesmen and kings, popes and potentates to glorify them by high-sounding titles, but the harsh fact remains that war is a brutal outlet for brutal natures. Life is a sacred gift. The laws of every country combine to make it so for the individual. Why then should it become a "duty" to take it *en masse?* Why is it less a sin to destroy a hundred men than one? Why has one special personage the right to condemn helpless millions to the horrors and hardships and blood-guiltiness that he himself shuns, simply because he wears a crown and they are held in the bondage of a false loyalty to that insignia?

Many a mother's heart asked that question. Many a wounded soldier lying in

trench or battle-field groaned its hopeless problem to the stars and the night and the creeping shadows that he knew held only death. Many such travellers opening eyes of wonder on the next stage of their journey sprang for gun or sword, and shouted familiar command, unconscious as yet that they had "passed over."

To be one moment pulsing with the feverish activity of the physical life, the next—you know not where. That has been the explanation given of many a death in France and Flanders; an explanation given in too convincing a fashion to disbelieve.

My friend of the "automatic" writing received some such message as Raymond gave from her nephew killed in France. He could not believe he was *dead*. He thought he was still on earth. He saw crowds of people and stared confusedly at them. He felt strangely tired, and longed for sleep. Someone came to him and led him away; it seemed to a room. In any case he threw himself down on a couch

and fell immediately asleep. His wounds did not hurt him, though he had been badly wounded. He could not tell how long he slept, but when he woke he was told that he had left the earth plane. His thoughts rushed to those who would mourn for him. Could he not send a word of hope, a message that he still lived? Then gradually he began to recognise friends he had known, relatives long since "passed on." Comfort was given him, and explanation. One day he suddenly found himself standing by his aunt. She was sitting at a table on which was some writing paper. He saw a pencil and found himself wishing he could write some message to assure her of his welfare.

As the wish rose in his mind he saw the physical hand take up the pencil *and begin to write his message*. He did not know how it was done, or why. But he saw how astonished his aunt became as she read the words; how she gazed up and round the room and spoke out his name, and then sank on her

knees and prayed in gratitude for this proof of continued life on the part of one they had deemed lost.

"But none of us are *that,*" he wrote. "We all *live,* and feel well and bright and happy, and want to do the right thing here on earth."

Similar messages to this became a frequent occurrence at séances. Mediums who knew nothing of persons visiting them received grateful letters thanking them for what had been given under trance conditions. "Sittings" and "circles" became familiar incidents in many a household, for such news soon spreads.

Hot-foot upon these incidents came the frank and authoritative revelations of "Raymond." And what spiritualism owes to him and the courage of his celebrated father only spiritualists know. It was as if a gate had been unlocked and all that it had concealed of a realm as yet unvisited was thrown open to the seeker.

The reticence which had so long fenced the subject round, and kept those who knew from anything like confidences, suddenly disappeared. People began to speak frankly and openly of "spiritualism" as the bridge between known and unknown conditions. Reasonable communications came through various channels. Of the comfort given and the hopes assured only the bereaved ones know. The cut-and-dry barriers of so-called religious opinions were set at naught. With all reverence and in passionate gratitude the sorrowful mourners received their messages of hope, and there were not wanting many to declare that if the war had been disastrous in one way it had made atonement in another.

Taking into consideration the thousands upon thousands who might wish to communicate with earth friends, and the very limited supply of mediums who can assist them, it is rather wonderful that so much has "come through."

It is also rather saddening to think that many who would like to communicate cannot learn the ways and means of doing so. Some are prevented as the penalty of misdeeds on earth; others by an absence of the intense spiritual affection which acts as a magnet between the living and the "absent" personality.

It was some time before Raymond gave the description of that sphere to which he had passed. His first efforts seemed to be confined to convincing his people that it really was himself speaking, and that they were not the victims of self-deception.

Of course he was only able to speak through the medium's "control," and that fact is the one drawback to the messages. For this control is represented as a little Indian girl, and she has to make herself a channel between the boy who is speaking and the medium who is repeating what is said while in trance conditions.

Sometimes this girl is very frivolous, often a little silly, and somewhat illiterate. One cannot help wondering why Raymond had to use her, unless it was that she was the special guide and protector of the special medium who was helping *his* people to get into communication with him.

Conditions of this sort are as yet less satisfactory than one would desire. The mediums are not only very limited as to number, but, as I have said before, in no way remarkable for a high order of intelligence, or even very great spirituality.

When the late W. T. Stead talked of setting up " Julia's Bureau " he had discovered this drawback. I know nothing of that bureau or whether it is in working order. I should imagine that Mr. Stead himself would have set to work on the " other side " to perfect this scheme. He was an ardent spiritualist, and kept authentic records of psychic life and wonders. I have heard of him as being present at various séances, but al-

though I knew him on this side, I have not had the pleasure of any greeting from the other.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is another convert to spiritualism. He has written a good deal about it, and of various investigations and experiences. But he dwells chiefly on the phenomenal side of the subject, for which I personally have little regard. It matters nothing to me that people can let themselves be tied up like parcels with sealed knots and complicated fastenings; that they immure themselves in dark cabinets and while still bound and tied are seemingly responsible for the playing of tambourines and the flinging out of missiles. The explanation is that they have allowed themselves to be used by a very low class of elemental spirit, whose earth nature is unchanged, and who is bent upon playing tricks for his own amusement. That such spirits *do* exist has been proved. The information and the proof are easily obtainable by anyone interested in psychic research.

The victims of idle curiosity, of a desire for merely something unnatural or abnormal, obtain what they want.

If such psychic phenomena has been revived after all the discredit poured upon it in the past, it may be less to create wonder than to evoke inquiry. And that it *has* evoked inquiry is shown by the attention devoted to the subject by the authorities I have quoted. It seems to me that when two scientific investigators such as Sir Oliver Lodge and the late Sir William Crookes throw their belief into the scale of psychic research their opinion must carry a certain weight. Such an opinion lifts even the much discredited "phenomena" out of the ruck of mere trick mediumship. Psychic experience is of so varied and peculiar a nature that it demands investigation by trained psychologists.

Whether the reward of such research justifies the persecution it receives is best known to the patient seeker after truth.

X

Problems of Life

The greatest barrier to anything like the spiritual progress of man has been man's conception of religion.

It is a bold assertion, but one has only to read back the records of religious history to see that the countries controlled by priestly tyranny have been the greatest criminals against purity, clean-mindedness and progress. Science and art and invention have had to fight their hardest against priestly arrogance and priestly superstition. There is nothing more dangerous for man than to be set "in a little brief authority" before his fellow-men. And of all authority spiritual bigotry is at once the harshest and most dangerous.

Lamentable are the records of "Holy Wars"; of the terrible tragedies of Italy and Spain; France and Ireland; of all empires where the cross is raised as authority instead

of weakness—the sign of man's crime against heaven, instead of heaven's justification of a foreordained sacrifice.

The life of Christ, whether regarded as that of Martyr or Saviour, has been surrounded by so many myths and improbabilities that its absolute records of material importance are lost sight of. The Church in its eagerness to hold the mysteries of spiritual demonstration strove its utmost to clothe all such material affairs with mystery. Yet Christ was man. Even the Church cannot deny that. Man—to whom God had granted greater purity of mind and knowledge than any prophet or teacher had yet manifested.

It is this knowledge from which man has been so jealously barred. He has been told he can only learn of it through the teachings of a special Church into which he has been received in irresponsible infancy, and from whose authorities he can alone secure true spiritual training.

This is pure fallacy.

The universe is permeated with spiritual influences. Nature teaches the secrets of life: seed, growth, maturity, decay; and yet *persistence* in another form after such apparent decay. The heavens are full of wisdom. The planets and the stars, the laws which govern light or darkness, or storm or calm, are all fixed and unchangeable laws by which man can read the lessons of creation. Nature has been the instructor of science, and if by Nature we understand God, science offers no barrier to such faith.

The two most important questions which the individual man asks are: "Whence came I?" "Whither do I go?"

The dust of the earth, the rib from Adam's side, the eating of the apple, all these have gained problematical significance in their passage down the stream of time. At the present age of the world's planetary existence they are not accepted as *belief* by any sensible or educated person. So that "Whence came I?" has become a more per-

emptory demand than in past times of strictly clerical teaching.

Science has taught man the secret of life. He has learnt for himself of its dominating force; of the struggle to preserve it and make the best of it according to a physical sense of "best." He sees the relationship of life to the world in which he lives and that it is impossible to picture the one without the other. He looks at his strong, well-made physical body and then is smitten by the humiliating fact that its strength is no more than that little feeble exhalation called "breath"; a film on the mirror on which he sends it forth; a thread no surer than the gossamer unsubstantiality of a spider's web.

To realise this is to formulate the second question: "Whither do I go?"

The phenomena of spiritualism offers help. It has shown the continuation of the earth body in a new form, but wearing the same aspect.

Christ himself appeared in this aspect, if

His *physical* death is credited. Why should He have done so if it were not to show the world at large that not only does the semblance of the body persist, but it can *prove* and *show* its persistence! Yet it is here that spiritualism comes up against the shipwrecking opposition of the Church.

Apparitions as Biblical records—well and good. But apparitions in the nineteenth century, speaking, giving messages, revealing things appertaining to the next world—impossible!

Express your feelings about the real ego to a clergyman. Tell him you are not satisfied with what the Church says, or what certain Biblical authorities have said as to its conditions *after* death, and he will call you presumptuous. He will demand sternly how you dare to question the Word of God. Ask him: "But *is* it the Word of God?" and he will say he does not argue with heretics, and that he will pray for a better understanding on your part, and so—good-bye to you!

What exactly is life? Who shall define it satisfactorily? For we live in our emotions, our affections, our creations, as well as in our physical exertions. Matter without spirit does not seem a satisfactory existence, although spirit without matter has proved itself the possessor of life. It would seem as if the material body of man drew into itself certain forces for certain purposes, and at the same time used them as a manifestation *of* purpose.

The phase of spiritual phenomena which proves the materialisation of a spirit body as possible is the phase most bitterly combated. Also it has allowed of unworthy practices. At certain séances the medium has been proved to disguise himself and pretend to be the character he represents. One such discovery is enough to throw discredit upon the whole business.

Yet there have been dishonest lawyers, dishonest clergymen, dishonest statesmen, though the Law, the Church and the Govern-

ment still persist and still carry on their various professions. Of course the one great objection to materialisation is that it must take place in the dark. And in darkness trickery is more possible than in the light of day.

But the sceptic might consider also that certain phenomena require certain conditions. We do not yet fully understand the chemical forces of the body. We have been told there is something perpetually going on within it in the shape of molecular activity; that there are red and white corpuscles in the blood, and the two urge perpetual warfare for its physical welfare or destruction. Thus it would seem we inherit the seeds of death with the seeds of life. But we never think of that unless the internal warfare produces bodily sickness. For hundreds of years men knew nothing of these facts. They lived and died and suffered, and called it the Will of God. Science calls it Biology.

Some day science will give its attention

to the phenomenon of materialising a visible body in the shadowy darkness of a room where a few serious-minded and anxious people are assembled. Science may possibly remember that life-production is always a *secret* process. Nature's creative functions work only in the darkness. Flowers and blossoms do not spring ready-born into the sunlight. Roots of trees and plants perform their miracles of sustenance and continuation in the depths of the earth. Is it therefore unnatural that so wonderful a phenomenon as spirit appearance should require darkness in the process of using the living force it derives from some mediumistic helper? There must be darkness to emphasize light. And the spirit form is shaped and shown as light; ethereal, uncertain; wavering between the unconscious human entity from whom its visibility has been drawn, and the circle of watchers to whom such visibility is inexplicable. The giving-out of the power for such manifestations is a terrible risk for the me-

dium; a risk hardly worth the wonder it arouses, the incredulity it receives.

As yet the whole matter is wrapped in mystery. We only know that materialisation is as much a problem as fœtal development and, like it, insists upon performing its creative work in *darkness*. But as such work implies an intelligence and a purpose it should not be impossible to discover the source of both.

Possibly the medium co-operates with the spirit force; certainly the control or guide must direct operations. There is something rather awful and awe-inspiring in the whole business. It is not one that I personally favour. I should not care to have anyone I loved show themselves to me by such a process. I would rather wait on that meeting in the spirit world which becomes more and more assured the more we study spiritualism.

It is as a problem of the life forces manifested after death that materialisation chiefly

attracts attention. As spirit voices depend upon etherical vibrations, so must spirit visibility build itself out of etherical substance. Air space, electric force, the presence of other material forms, the subconscious obedience of one special agent, all these seem necessary to the process. But the true meaning of such phenomena is not half understood, especially in their dangerous conditions. We hardly dare believe in the reality of the shadowy *something* we see developing from a mere thread into seeming stability. We hardly dare to question who or what it is that hovers before us in the séance room, and whose whispered assurance of identity is less convincing than alarming.

Is there really no death? Was what we saw coffined and put aside from human ken into the darkness of the grave merely a shell of which this is the living counterpart? Or are we deceiving ourselves; hypnotised into a dumb acceptance of marvels? These are questions we dare not ask at first. Only with

patient study of the subject and a growing interest as well as a growing confidence in its importance do we summon courage to do so. Then we are surprised to find how many others have had the same thoughts, the same doubts, the same hesitance.

The problem of life becomes less interesting than that of death if once we realise that there is no actual death of what we have recognised as *ourselves*. Just a brief severance from the plane of one existence to the continuity of another; the progress of individual force into the many forces and variations of physical and psychic consciousness. As the certainty of this continuity grows within us, so also we learn the reason for our many journeys to the physical plane. How we proceed from matter to spirit, and spirit back again to matter, always cumbered with certain duties, certain obligations from which there is no escape. Whoever yet lived in this world who would not change some condition of his life if it were possible? Who has ever

known perfect content? And the reason is that before the physical experience we know, we have sinned; we are re-created to suffer for such sin; sometimes to atone.

It is the reason for an action that makes its merit or its guilt. Sometimes the guilt lies in the consequences that that action has brought upon others. The spirit is confronted with the deeds of the body, and must acknowledge with shame and penitence a presented record of the past.

In all the many legends of haunted houses, persisting apparitions and such-like phenomena there has always been a confession of guilt; a desire to atone; a passionate seeking for some spiritual help from those whose prayers might lift the hateful burden. The wandering spirit can find no rest, no peace. Earth-bound by its physical crimes, it must remain on the old battle-field of moral strife. It must show itself to anyone whose psychic powers enable it to do so. It has not cast

off personality with death; it cannot forget; the very hell of its own making is the hell that holds it chained to its earthly sin.

In such instances one recognises a use in the séance room and in the mysteries of mediumistic powers. Through these powers comes cognisance of such troubled souls, and through their sight and speech is confession possible. In all such records confession seems a necessity. If not by spoken word, by action which has led to discovery of some victim of crime, or some hidden treachery by which others have suffered.

Have such things no meaning?

They at least possess the power of making man think out for himself the problems of the spirit world; of asking why, if one entity can manifest itself, should not another. But in so asking it may be well to remember that when such spiritual entity did present itself it was not seen by the many but the few. Samuel, Elijah, Christ were only visible to a limited circle of "witnesses." No human

eye actually *saw* Jesus leave the tomb. Yet all Christians believe he did leave it, and did show himself in spirit form to the little crowd of disciples.

Does miracle then disprove itself? No force of nature was ever known to alter its rules of creating, destroying and persisting. Do not these faculties embrace the whole phenomena of physical life?

Creation—birth. Destruction—physical death. Persistence—spirit continuation.

XI

On Spirit Continuance and Survival

Human life represents human progress as well as human backsliding.

If, according to the Theosophist, the present is but an outcome of the past, and succeeding races are but branches of the first or root-race, the history of mankind is of endless interest.

For in all this persistence it is the spirit of man that has raised him out of crude ignorance and mere brute strength to ever greater intelligence. To recognise mistakes and be granted the power to relive one's lost opportunities and thus amend them, surely means a more rational outlook for men than one life and one death.

It also shows both good and sufficient reason for that *persisting* force of Art which throughout the ages has manifested itself in portrayal of beauty and sound and structure. Art proved that genius had a purpose; that

it was perceptive as well as creative; and Art made man the channel for its own powers of manifestation, and has helped him to adorn and illumine the world in which he found temporary resting-place.

Yet Art seems to have been accepted as the purely *physical* development of culture. Without the physical instrument it could not manifest itself, therefore some special brain or hand of man were alone responsible for his intellect or his artistry.

Had this been so Art would have died when its portrayer died. The reed holds no music when the singer is dumb. But Art has never died because it lives in the spirit of man, not in his body. It is the gift of some persisting personality to another personality that follows it.

The artist himself is amazed by the first discovery of his power. His soul is flooded as it were with the light "that never was on land or sea," but radiates for ever in the heaven of the immortals. The pride in that

discovery of being able to do any special thing better than one's fellow-man is only exceeded by the wonder that such power is given to so few.

It would make the whole world happier if the poet's soul, the artist's eye, the sculptor's sense of form and the writer's gift of imagination were more universal. But Fate has decreed otherwise.

There shall always be the giver and the receiver; always the creator and the thing created.

The joy of life is novelty. Something new to think about or experience. Something unexplored to test one's patience for investigating. Some kind power has made of thought the nucleus of every invention and every activity that has made physical life so wonderful.

For all things spring from a thought in the first instance. Possibly creation itself did so. Thought is no abstract idealistic function of the brain, but rather the essence

of a reality. It is in thought that man develops his schemes and his inventions; his projects of ambition; his gifts of imagination. Yet who shall say exactly what thought *is*, and whence it comes?

If from the brain, then we must believe that the brain is an operating agent of some higher intelligence that pours into receptive channels what it formulates as outward manifestation. And that "intelligence" is not of this world or of purely physical conditions. Thought operates from the mental on to the material plane. Thought translates ideality into plain reality. Thought is the seed from which proceeds the blossom and the fruit of mental conception, and thought is the power and meaning of life, the harmonious rhythm which vibrates to all emotional activity.

It is undoubtedly in the region of thought that the spirit operates. Science has spoken of "thought waves"; mental currents as real as the conducting forces of heat and light and

magnetism. These currents flow onward and outward to the shores of active uses; they become man's helper as well as his teacher. They respond to all shades and degrees of harmony. They attract and they repel.

If the power of thought were realised as the danger it is, man would be educated into using it as carefully as he is taught to use the electric current; to mix, or separate chemical products; to experiment with explosive substance. But he receives no education that teaches of such danger, because his teachers have for centuries taken it for granted that brain is a mere physical attribute of the body and thought appertains to that attribute.

Almost all education is commonplace or artificial. It deals with intelligence *en masse,* and trains every shoot and branch of the young tree in the same manner and by the same methods.

Mental difference is self-developed. Education does not evolve, still less does it help

it. Education classifies all characters, natures and dispositions as one force to be governed by another force. Such delicate variations as spirituality, ideality, sensitiveness, psychic tendencies are ruthlessly swept into the same unmodified conditions as have been standardised by custom.

Religion, as an educative factor, is at once the most hopeless and helpless of all educative resources; and that because it makes little appeal to either the intelligence or the sympathy of the young. Also because it is enforced as a rule of observance. The child hates coercion as much as he hates inaction. The early boredom of Catechism and Scripture lessons, morning prayer and church attendance makes an indelible impression upon the young mind. School and college and the society of its fellows do not as a rule enlighten that impression with any degree of spiritual meaning. Whatever *does* visit that young mind in the form of spirituality is the product of thought, and thought

has its own ground of self-teaching and self-development.

Possibly in some day to come science will have traced the demonstration of brain energy to the operating forces of another sphere of activity; to past energies longing for re-manifestation; to thought waves floating on a sea of ever-restless vitality; to those mystic air currents of whose power we still know so little save that they can be caught and chained to telegraphic elucidation. All these things so strange and so mysterious to-day may be no longer mysterious and no longer inexplicable to another generation.

The inventor of wireless telegraphy has hinted at such possibility as wireless telephonic speech from one end of the earth to the other. The idea of distance has long ceased to be a barrier to travel or intercommunication with far-off nations. The idea of space as untraversable may likewise become an idea to be abolished by the possibilities of planetary communication. Not half of the

mysteries of the universe or of ourselves as part of that universe are yet known.

Those who have passed on to other spheres may be anxious to throw open the gates to the seeker, and still be withheld by the knowledge that " the time is not yet."

That it *will* come, all those who have had anything to do with spiritual revelations or spiritual agency feel perfectly assured. The chain of worlds to which this earth belongs are not all of similar substance, or fitted for material habitation such as we call life. Some are so much higher in the scale of spirituality that they regard our little planet as vastly inferior to their own. That is not surprising. One can hardly picture any place of greater stupidity and criminality. But some secret ministration has always helped mankind forward on the road of progress; on the road of his own endeavour to perfect what is faulty and ennoble what is great. Has taught him to recognise beauty in nature, and purity in spirit, and possibility in character. And

Spiritual aspirations will alone draw the soul into the celestial world, and there it will learn the true meaning of life. And *there* it will remember the past.

On the physical plane such memory would only be profitless, and weaken the hold on present conditions. Man can only vision the Future through the Now. His present is full of brief and ephemeral desires. He is in a school whose education is enforced and only a determined struggle can release him. The fiercer the struggle the greater the victory, and with the victory will come that prophetic vision of the soul which ever strives to remake itself in a Divine likeness. He will see the life of to-day as a link in the chain of all days that are past and all days to come. Then with some profit to himself he may recall all he has been, and done, and left undone.

The individual is driven back to the Source, the great creator of Itself. He learns, not of some dim survival beyond the grave, but the full meaning of life immortal.

XII

What is Spiritualism?

And now for the summing up of the whole matter. What exactly *is* Spiritualism, and how does it affect the acknowledged religions of the world?

In the first place it is *not* an orthodox religion, although it is the root and source of all religions. It is not a science, although it idealises all science. It is not a phenomenon, although it produces and manifests many forms of phenomena. It is the possibility of intercommunion between the earth and the world beyond the earth; between those who live physically and those who live spiritually. It uses the life of each as a manifestation of the inward meaning *of* Life, as life embraces body, soul and spirit.

It has no creed save that of love and an endless compassion. It recognises the father-

hood of God and the brotherhood of man. It believes in the immortality of the soul as well as in the immortality of its highest characteristics. It asserts with humble confidence the possibility of communion between spirit and mortal.

It acknowledges personal responsibility for good or evil; compensation and retribution for all such good or evil done on the physical plane. And it shows a path of eternal progress open to every human soul that *desires* to travel onward to the goal of eternal good.

This is the true teaching of Spiritualism. And much of it comes through the trance conditions imposed upon certain subjects of transmission.

This would seem to prove the truth of the statements conveyed that the spirit world is helping and ministering to the denizens of the physical world as a duty laid upon its inhabitants after passing on from earth life to the plane beyond.

It is a mission allotted to certain spirits of a high and unselfish order. It is also a mission often besought by such spirits as are very closely linked to the love and kinship of earth.

How often have people felt they were helped over some difficulty; strengthened in some hour of sorrow; comforted after some disaster. *Such help and comfort are not mere accidents.* They are the spiritual proof of consciousness persisting as consciousness. They are the voice of faith calling upon faith and entreating its continuance. It we realised that spirit companionship was not a phenomenal but a natural occurrence, would it not make us more careful in our way of conducting ourselves on this earth plane? Would we not welcome the idea that no far-off judicial eye was watching us, but the same loving human eye we had known and loved on earth? Would not the feeling of such guardianship keep us from falling into error; from the performance of any mean or sinful

action that would have shamed us in that departed presence?

It seems to me that *this* is what Spiritualism has come to teach. No stern implacable law; no awe-inspiring dread of some Omnipotent Being who hates us for being "born in sin" and therefore unable to reach any standard of sinlessness, but a lesson of our responsibility to ourselves as well as to those whom we love and who loved us.

If our actions were guided by the thought, "Do *they* see us—are *they* present here?" how could we do things of which they would be ashamed? How show to them the meanness or selfishness we had carefully guarded from their physical knowledge?

The teaching of orthodox religion holds no such theory. The dead are far away in some realm of blessedness and oblivion. That their spirits should preserve any consciousness of material things (even so far as helping to ameliorate them) is a presumption not to be entertained.

Their fate has been arbitrarily fixed. No one must presume to interfere with it.

And this is one reason why orthodoxy is so set against spiritualism and why the savagely material man so hates the assumption of psychic manifestation. But abuse and persecution and even ridicule cannot alter a truth that has been once proved and accepted by even a limited number of truth-seekers.

They can afford to wait on the world's recognition. They know that a tardy delay of such acknowledgment only affects that world. The hour will come when man will know, even as he is known.

And now to return once more to that "red rag" of bovine infuriation—phenomena. Many people ask: "How can we get into touch with the spirit world?" "How find out whether a loved one we have lost *can* communicate with us?" "Must there be a séance room; a medium; the exposure of delicate and intimate feelings before a crowd of unknown, even if sympathetic persons?"

I am afraid I can only say: " Yes "—unless the inquirer possesses the qualifications of a medium. But this qualification is not so uncommon as we suppose. It is often unsuspected and therefore undeveloped. We can rush into no business, or art, or profession on the impulse of mere desire. We must train ourselves mentally. In like manner we have to learn a mode of spiritual training for spiritual things.

The revelations of " Raymond " came first through a professional medium, influenced by a friend of the boy's father who had been an ardent spiritualist. But once communication had been made possible the family pursued it privately in the home circle. If the means and methods of doing so seem crude and trivial, they only prove what all beginnings prove, that the instrument used for any special purpose is far less significant than the purpose behind its use.

The greatest mechanical invention is dependent on some small screw, some tiny fit-

ting of its engine. The great discovery of the world's gravitation was made through the fall of an apple. The amazing possibilities of railway transport sprang from the steam-power of a boiling kettle. The mind that seized upon *that* triviality and foresaw its effect upon the future was only the mind of a poor hard-working mechanic who supplemented a scanty wage by mending watches. But Nature selects her own workmen and pays scant attention to external attributes. She knows what she requires, and how to obtain it. If, therefore, the development of spirit communication is only to be brought about by the powers of mediumship, those powers will be evoked and continued. Certain conditions are as essential to their *physical* demonstration as fire is necessary for heat, or light for purpose of illumination. We see cause and effect in all the aspects of life, in all the discoveries of science.

We might remember that men were once scourged to death for beliefs that now are

second nature; that nothing in the shape of discovery has ever been born into acceptance without opposition. And remembering this we can trust the whole mysterious meaning of spiritual phenomena to that future which shall either prove or destroy it. We may also discover that when the vicious, the sceptical and the readily credulous are excluded from a circle of inquirers the results will prove more worthy of the cause. There is no need to fear tests of what is manifested as long as those who seek them are neither blinded by prejudice or encased in material arrogance.

But if we seek and are *sought* by spiritual friends on that "other side" of which we speak so frankly, we must approach them with due solemnity, and a due regard to the ethics of psychic as well as material science.

The heavy curtain of doubt that has so long hung between two worlds, parting the Here from the Beyond, is slowly lifting, and slowly revealing what our own fears have

kept from us. Once we realise that we are receiving help, and giving it, that the spirits beyond can and do visit us and remember us, that life is a *continuation,* not a termination, the meaning of death's great mystery will be made clear, and we shall pursue fearlessly and high-mindedly all that pertains to the psychology of existence.

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